

■ PlayStation 3 ■ PlayStation Portable ■ PlayStation Network ■ PlayStation 2



# PlayStation

Special Magazine

DECEMBER 09

## SNIPER POINT

Peek here with the red dot-scope and it's like fishing with dynamite.

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## SMACKDOWN VS RAW

The first JAW-BUSTING, head-butting review

## BATMAN: ARKHAM ASYLUM

Riddle me *everything!* All bosses crushed, EVERY item found



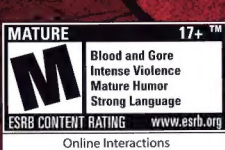
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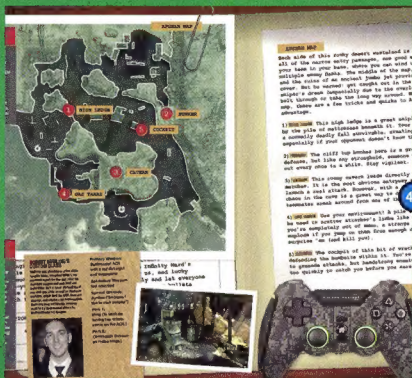
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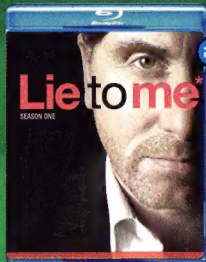
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# Editor's Note

"This is the universe. Big, isn't it?"

**Don't bother guessing the movie quote above.** It's from a very old, obscure film with two titles (one of which may or may not have inspired a Led Zeppelin song) and my point is simply this: There's a lot out there right now. A few years ago, I saw a statistic that claimed 50-percent of the games released during a given year—literally half of that year's total line-up—hit store shelves during the 90-day period between mid-September and mid-November. I can't confirm whether or not that's still true, but looking at the avalanche of holiday titles that sweeps down the mountain and buries us at this exact time each and every year, it feels completely accurate. This month, the crush is just starting. Next issue, we'll be engulfed by it.

It's actually a totally broken system. Gamers can't possibly afford to buy all the games they've been waiting all year to play. And because there's such a glut of releases, many legitimately great titles are overlooked. The most legendary example was 2003, when *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* and *Beyond Good & Evil*, two fantastic games, were both practically ignored. But it happens every year. And even with a surprising number of big games moving to 2010, it's going to happen again this holiday season.

Unless you do something about it, that is. For starters, if you're up to the challenge, check out *Demon's Souls*, a stunning Action RPG that's also one of the most spirit-crushingly difficult games ever devised. Seriously, this brutal beast is going to separate the men from the boys and then make those men cry like little girls. But it's a treat to look at, it's doing online co-op and PVP in a way that's never been done before,

“When you finish a battle, you really feel you've accomplished something. Don't miss this one...unless you're a sissy.”

and when you finish a battle, you really feel you've accomplished something. Don't miss this one...unless you're a sissy.

This issue also showcases two games that we're absolutely positive are going to be smash hits this year regardless of the competition. One is *Batman: Arkham Asylum*, also known as the finest superhero game ever created. We've compiled full boss strategies and a truly gigantic guide to hundreds of collectible items and secrets so you can squeeze every drop of gaming from the Dark Knight's chilling-yet-thrilling adventure.

The second is our cover game, the fanatically anticipated *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2*. You may have heard of it. We've got exclusive maps and multiplayer tips plucked right from the brains of the people making the game—before it even ships. Sure it's a little early, but we know you're going to want them, so why wait? After all, the universe may be a big place, but we're still determined to make PTOM one of the best magazines in it.

## The Quiz

Match each statement with its corresponding game.

a) "Do you want comically hard, inhumanly hard, or 'Caution: May be considered a torture device in some states'?"

b) "I know she's a deranged psycho killer. I'm just saying she's super-hot."

c) "In this scene, the lovely Mickie James will confess her love for my alter-ego, the Masked Revenger."

d) "We know your question. His name is Ghost."

e) "This is Dad. Keep him away from our pets."



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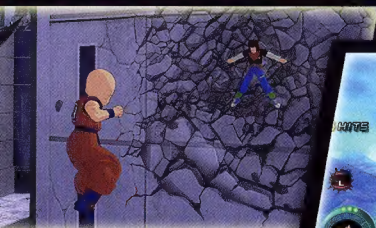
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# THE 10

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# 1 SOLID INTEL: PEACE WALKER

We access the personnel files of the biggest game coming to PSP

**T**here are just so many unanswered questions. Is Big Boss really a member of the Patriots?

What gives rise to the creation of Outer Heaven? Why the hell are there multiple, *identical Snakes* sneaking around together in *Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker*'s latest trailer? We don't have all the answers yet, but we do have more information on the game that might eventually provide them.

We already know that *Peace Walker* takes place in 1974—10 years after *Metal Gear Solid 3* and four years after *Portable Ops*—and stars the same protagonist as both those games: Naked Snake. When a peaceful Costa Rica finds itself threatened by mysterious armed forces, Snake and his newly created organization "*Soldiers Without Borders*" are asked to intervene (no idea what happened to FOXHOUND, which Naked Snake founded at the end of *Portable Ops*).

We also know that co-operative multiplayer (cleverly dubbed "CO-OPS") plays a major roll in the game and will introduce a host of new mechanics. Assuming you're within your partner's "ring," you'll be able to share health, items, and ammo; attach yourself to your partner for tandem sneaking; and revive one another if one partner happens to suck...or, die. And though we don't know why, there are crazy new cardboard box designs (a tank box? We'd ridicule that, but it's too cool).

We also get a first look at a few of *Peace Walker*'s major players, including two unknowns, one blast from the past, and of course, Big Boss himself.





## Naked Snake

Through his massive armor (if now, this is the same Snake you guided through *MGS3*—at which he was forced to kill his mentor, a legendary soldier known as The Boss (thereby earning himself the nickname “Big Boss”), in order to avert a global nuclear disaster—and *Portable Ops*—in which he thwarted rogue members of his former CIA special unit in order to avoid prosecution for charges of treason. He also happens to be the soldier from which all subsequent generations of Snakes were cloned. At the beginning of *Peace Walker*, he’s leading his mercenary group known as *Militaires San Frontières* (Soldiers Without Borders) out of Colombia, South America.

## Paz

A newcomer to the series, Paz—whose name of course means “peace” in Spanish—is a young Costa Rican student with a passion for peace. When she’s not busy studying her country’s “Peace Constitution” at the Unaffiliated United Nations University for Peace, she’s being captured by the mysterious armed forces that are encroaching on her nation’s territory! Maybe that’s why she and her professor, Gálvez, decide to entrust Snake and his Soldiers Without Borders for a little assistance.

## Miller

His name? McDonnell. Miller doesn’t ring it a bell, you probably haven’t played the original *Metal Gear Solid* in a while. He’s Solid Snake’s former mentor who’s brought out of retirement to advise Snake during the Shadow Moses mission... though, of course, it turns out to be Liquid Snake in disguise! Ah, we’re led to believe that Miller was indeed a figure in Solid’s past before Liquid murdered him. So, assuming this isn’t the real Miller, Miller’s alien robot clone brother (this is a *Metal Gear* game, after all), perhaps we’ll finally get to meet the man who trained Solid Snake and learn how he ended up fighting alongside Big Boss in Columbia (note the skull-head Soldiers Without Borders patch on his sleeve).

## Gálvez

A long time professor and lecturer on the subject of peace, Gálvez teaches at the University for Peace, (are you noticing a theme here? They’re really “giving peace a chance” down in Costa Rica) and just like Paz, he’s really keen on having Snake investigate and eliminate the hostile forces that, for some unspecified reason, seem very interested in invading Costa Rica’s space. However, his creepy robot hand leads us to believe that he might not be quite as peace loving as he seems... Well, that and the fact that Konami straight up told us.

## Identities Confirmed: Status Unknown



# The God of War-series' SEVEN BEST MOMENTS (So Far)

A list of jaw-dropping reasons to revisit the classics in HD

**G**od of War III is still a ways off, but don't despair—*God of War Collection* hits PS3s in November. Whether you're new to Kratos' adventures or revisiting them, it's a chance to play *God of War* and *God of War II* in upgraded, gore-soaked 720p HD. Here are the choice moments to watch for:



7

## THE LOVE SCENES *God of War*

These interludes cemented the series' reputation as a subversively wanton game that simply did not give a damn. Kratos' violent lovemaking happened off-screen while we watched a piece of scenery shake in time with our button presses, but sex in games—even implied sex—is still a rare enough occurrence to be a little shocking, even in an M-rated title.

6

## THE CAGE *God of War*

Somewhere in the sprawling Temple of Pandora is a crying, pleading warrior trapped in a man-sized cage. Just beyond him is a long slope, at the top of which is a trap that, once triggered, will bathe his cage in fire and roast him to death. Unfortunately for him, this needs to happen before the door to the next room can open. Even more unfortunately for him, Kratos is a bad, bad man.

5

## THE BATTLE WITH PERSEUS *God of War II*

When your series is so obviously inspired by a film—in this case, *Clash of the Titans*—it's hard to think of a more potent form of validation than having that movie's star, Harry Hamlin, show up and reprise his role as Perseus, complete with some of the powers his character had in the film. His appearance all but made *God of War II* part of the *Clash of the Titans* canon, which only made it that much sadder when Perseus ended up dangling from a meat hook.

4

## THE HYDRA BATTLE *God of War*

When you start a *God of War* game, you'd better be ready to smack down giants. That point was made with a grand flourish by *God of War*'s first boss, the towering, three-headed sea serpent Hydra, which can only be defeated by staking its heads to the deck of a ship. *Brutal*.

3

## CRONOS CRAWLS INTO VIEW *God of War*

If there's one thing the *God of War* games do well, it's the way they establish a massive sense of scale. And nowhere does the first game do that better than when Cronos, the Titan cursed to carry the colossal Temple of Pandora on his back, crawls out of the desert. Cronos is enormous, even though he's really just a special effect; as the cutscene wherein Kratos climbs on him, a tiny version of Kratos swings past his massive head on chains. The rest of the time, visual trickery makes him look like a huge figure in the distance. Whatever the case, he firmly establishes that *God of War* doesn't go small on anything.

2

## ATLAS *God of War II*

As impressive as Cronos' hugeness is, you never really interact with him directly—he's always just a figure in the distance (until Kratos climbs him in a cutscene). *God of War II* dumped the fakery and upped the ante with the even more gigantic and very tangible Titan, Atlas, who literally bears the weight of the world on his shoulders. This behemoth is so huge that he is the stage. And as Kratos fights through his cavernous veins and climbs up his massive face, it's impossible not to feel a little awed at how tiny and insignificant Kratos is next to the colossal Atlas.

1

## THE BATTLE WITH ARES *God of War*

War god Ares is a bastard, pure and simple. He's to blame for the deaths of Kratos' family, and by extension for causing Kratos' eternal rage and broken, remorseless spirit. The final battle against Ares—which unfolds in Athens' harbor, with both Kratos and Ares grown to rubber-suit monster size—also contains the game's most heartbreaking moment, as well as a suitably epic conclusion wherein Kratos ends the fight (and Ares) with a statue's massive stone sword.

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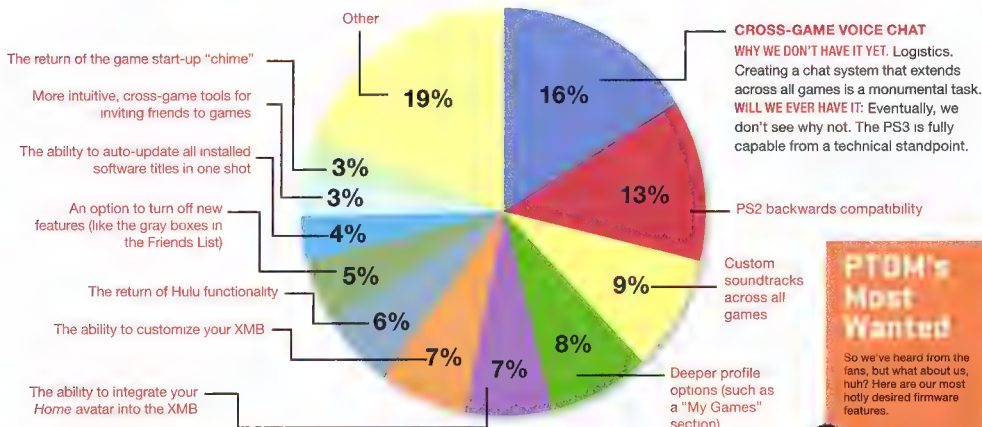
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# 3 PTOM Poll: Future Firmware

What's the most desired Firmware feature among our readers? We decided to find out...

**F**irmware 3.0 has finally arrived. And while it delivered a few welcome updates (like background downloading and dynamic themes), there are endless possibilities for additional tweaks to expand the PS3's

functionality. Which ones are most important to you, the PlayStation Nation? To find out, we asked a scientifically selected group of readers the following question: What features do you want to see added in future Firmware updates?



## CROSS-GAME VOICE CHAT

**WHY WE DON'T HAVE IT YET.** Logistics. Creating a chat system that extends across all games is a monumental task. **WILL WE EVER HAVE IT?** Eventually, we don't see why not. The PS3 is fully capable from a technical standpoint.

## PTOM's Most Wanted

So we've heard from the fans, but what about us, huh? Here are our most hotly desired firmware features.



**SCOTT:** I really wish I had an easier time inviting friends to games. Playing *Killzone 2* with a bunch of readers during GamesRadar's 24-hour marathon was a nightmare. If I hadn't had to deal with that game's clunky interface, it would have been much easier.



**ROGER:** I'd like more flexibility in dealing with multiple PSN accounts—at least the ability to delete old accounts and transfer Trophy data. If nothing else, it'd be nice to be able to change or edit a username. Oh, and how about a broader range of compatible video formats without having to pay extra for codecs?



**ERIC:** How many requests do I get? I'd like Blu-rays and DVDs to have a fast-forward speed between 1.5x and 10x, which are both useless. I'd like Hulu and backwards compatibility back, and all the things Rog and Scott mentioned already. Oh, and personalized, customizable buying suggestions—for example, if I bought a *PAIN* level in the past, I'd like to tell it to automatically message me when there are new levels available in the store. I don't want to miss a thing.

## Custom soundtracks across all games

**WHY WE DON'T HAVE IT YET.** Legality. Microsoft patented the idea of in-game custom soundtracks before the PS3 launched.

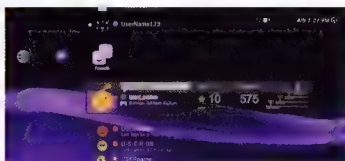
**WILL WE EVER HAVE IT.** Unlikely, but not impossible. However, developers can already implement their own customizable music playback systems within individual games, so hopefully this data will encourage more developers to do so.



## An option to turn off new features

**WHY WE DON'T HAVE IT.** Actually, many new features—such as the glittery background and defaulting to the What's New tab on start-up—can already be turned off. Unfortunately, not everything can be.

**WILL WE EVER HAVE IT?** We hope so. You have no idea how many complaints we heard about the grey boxes in the Friends List. Hey Sony, wouldn't reader Steven Shaw's mock-up (below) look better? See more at [tinyurl.com/XMBconcept](http://tinyurl.com/XMBconcept)



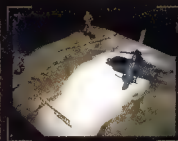
## PS2 backwards compatibility

**WHY WE DON'T HAVE IT YET.** The first-generation PS3s were backwards compatible because of physical hardware in the system, but that feature has been pruned. It could be revived with firmware updates, though.

**WILL WE EVER HAVE IT?** Possibly. The Xbox 360 has limited backwards compatibility via special software patches. There's no reason why Sony couldn't do the same. However, both companies claim there's a lack of player interest in this feature. If you want it, start shouting to Sony that you need it. A lot.



# CALL IN AN AIR STRIKE



Use the marker below to fly a digital hologram of the **AH-1Z** Helicopter from Operation Flashpoint.

➤ Go to [contests.gamesradar.com/airstrike](http://contests.gamesradar.com/airstrike)



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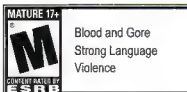
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# 4 UNDER THE HOOD

What's the first thing we do with a new PS3?  
Tear it apart!

It's 33-percent smaller, 36-percent lighter, and uses 34-percent less energy than the previous PS3 version it replaces. But you've just got to wonder how Sony managed to squeeze all the same gaming goodness into such a sleek and slender (dare we say, slim?) new form factor. PTOM rode shotgun as our friends at RapidRepair.com cracked open a new PS3 to see what makes it rev.

Trust us. The warranty department isn't going to accept, "but I thought that's how you're supposed to access the hard drive," as an excuse. ▶



## Warning: Warranty Voided

Warning: Dismantling your PS3, or even removing or damaging the Warranty Seal sticker, will void your warranty (although removing and upgrading the hard drive unit is permissible), so we don't recommend performing your own teardown. Instead, just come along for the ride.

### So is this the final PS3 version, then?

Erm, probably not. Sony hasn't confirmed anything, but their FCC filing indicates there might be a 250GB version of the new PS3 on the way with the model designation CECH-2001B. (The current 120GB version bears model number CECH-2001A.)



1. Eight concealed screws on the bottom of the PS3 hold the unit together.



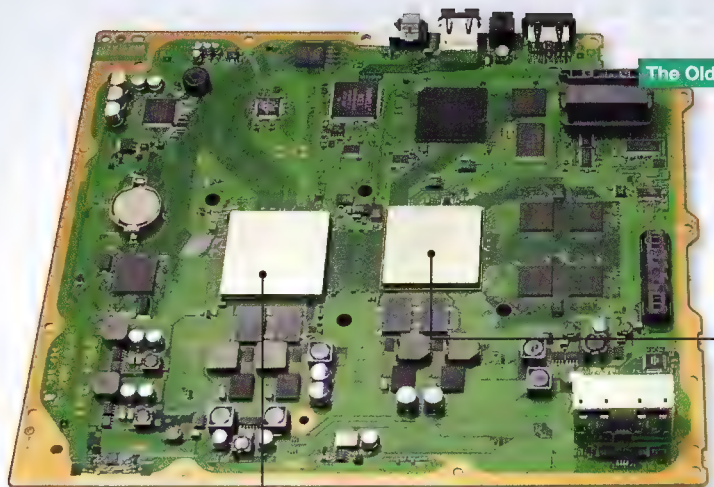
2. Once the screws are removed, lifting the top reveals the tightly compacted internals.



3. Internal cables are easily detachable. Lift components out as they're disconnected.



4. More cables to detach. Remove screws as they're encountered as well.



**The Old**

## Lean, Mean Machine

### CELL MICROPROCESSOR

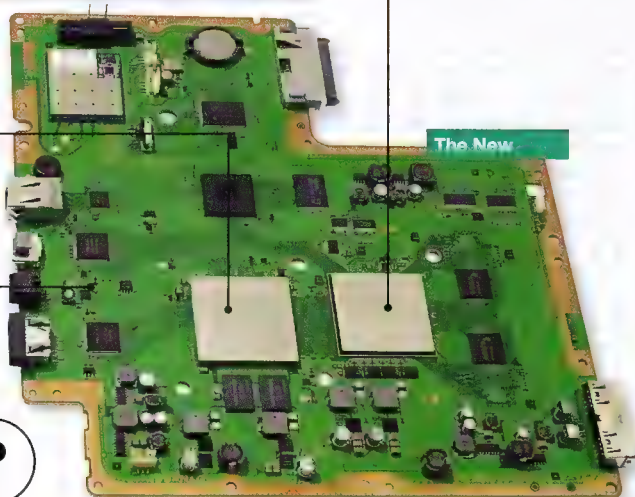
The Joint Sony - Toshiba - IBM-designed Cell microprocessor serves as the PS3's CPU, and is comprised of one 3.2GHz PowerPC-based Power Processing Element (PPE) and eight Synergistic Processing Elements (SPEs).

**NVIDIA RSX REALITY SYNTHESIZER**  
Graphics processing is handled by the RSX chip, which can output resolutions from 480i/576i SD up to 1080p HD. The PS3 has 256MB of XDR main memory and 256MB of GDDR3 video memory for the RSX.

**SHRINKAGE**  
Everything on the board seems smaller, which leaves room for a massive 12-volt, 1.3-amp fan that rivals the best found in desktop PCs.

**WHAT'S MISSING**  
Like recent "old-style" PS3 versions, the new PS3 has neither an emotion engine chip nor an emulator, so no PS2 backwards compatibility.

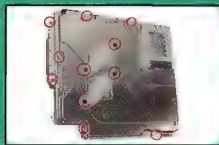
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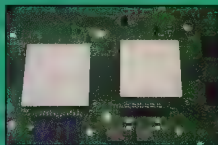
**The New**



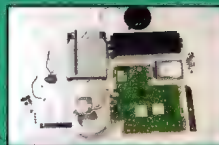
5. Hey, a fan the size of a plane propeller. You think the Xbox 360 has one of these?



6. Remove the screws holding the shroud and heat sinks in place to access the board.



7. RSX chip and Cell processor extreme close-up.



8. Okay, you remember how to put it back together, right?

# 5 GUITAR WARS

That bargain bin axe cramping your style? Maybe it's time to invest in the good stuff

## Logitech Wireless Guitar

Compatible with all titles | MSRP: \$199.99 | URL: [www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)

If you're wondering where your \$200 is going, look no further than the six pounds of wood that constitute the body of this guitar...well, actually it's fiberboard, but close enough. Not only does it look like a real guitar, it feels like one, with the appropriate left and scale (it's three feet long). The faux-pair inlays and real metal frets and tuning knobs are especially nice touches. Is it worth the full \$200? Well, that depends on your income. But it sure is cool, and our nit-picky complaints certainly don't change that.

### HEY THICK NECK!

At first, the actions seem like the weakest link here. They're not only very light, but also slightly smaller than the standard buttons (though the spacing remains the same). However, they're mounted on a rubber keyboard and prove to be impressively smooth and responsive in action—perfect for hammer-ons and pull-offs. The exceptionally thick neck—with its sharp right-angled front edges—doesn't offer any hidden benefits. It's uncomfortable, though not impossible to get used to, but at least the strum bar is quiet and reliable, assuming you like the typically sticky *Guitar Hero*-style strummer.

### MASTER OF DISGUISE

The Logitech Wireless Guitar is a master of disguise, cleverly integrating various functions into the standard guitar hardware: the Start button is beneath the bridge, the Directional-pad is actually the volume knob, and the Star Power and Select buttons are at the top and bottom of the humbucker pickup. Not only does this give the guitar a clean, authentic look, but in some cases it actually enhances basic functionality: the Star Power button, for instance, is easier to use than the one found on the standard controller because it protrudes further from the body. The whammy bar feels a little anemic, but that's forgivable.

### NOW THAT'S A STRUM BAR

Though it's grabatious knobs send it careering towards a cliff, the strum bar rides in to save the day from disaster. The strummer is actually split into two distinct levers to allow you to utilize the two-fingered up-picking style of a real bassist. Though this takes a bit of getting used to, it can actually change your entire music game experience for the better, especially if you're a serious bass enthusiast. Plus, the levers offer just the right amount of resistance to feel solid, but not stiff. Brilliant!

## Rock Band Wireless-Fender Precision Bass

Compatible with all titles [despite its name] | MSRP: \$89.99 | URL: [www.madcatz.com](http://www.madcatz.com)

As you can no doubt tell, this controller bears a truly remarkable resemblance to its namesake. Though not quite to scale, the aesthetics are near perfect, and the extended neck, while not necessarily any more functional, adds a dash of authenticity. Plus, it's surprisingly light, and the fret buttons are maybe just a bit lighter than those found on a standard Rock Band guitar. Overall, it's got a very nice feel.



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# 6 Interview with a Virtuoso: BRIAN BRIGHT



What does the future hold for rhythm games? Maybe the man behind *Guitar Hero* can tell us...

**T**he room was a dizzying cacophony. Rock 'n' Roll assaulted us from every imaginable angle like some kind of musical warzone. Perhaps the middle of a *Guitar Hero* event wasn't the best place to conduct an interview, but we had a chance to sit down with Brian Bright—the Project Director of *Guitar Hero 5* and the creative pilot of the single biggest franchise in videogames—for an off the cuff, unofficial discussion of what comes next for music games. So we took it.

**PTOM:** First of all, what kind of appetite do you think people will have for music games in the future? Where do you see music games going in the coming years and months?

**Brian Bright:** Well, it's always a new experience playing a song you haven't played before in any of these games. And you can play as the bassist, the guitarist, the vocalist, or the drummer. Whatever instrument you want to play is different; I don't see that necessarily getting stale. Like, for me, playing the drums on any song doesn't get stale. I might get tired, but it's like, "I'm playing the drums in a song." So I do think that at least there is staying power there. Even if certain aspects of these games get old or whatever, there's always new music. Even if you tap every song on *Rolling Stone's* Top 500 Rock Songs of All Time, there are always new songs coming out.

I think if we just continue to focus on what makes a game fun and if we can come up with gameplay stuff like the jump-

in, jump-out [co-op added by *GH5*—stuff that's fun and not gimmicky and just really compelling—I think there's staying power there. And I'm pretty excited about Natal and the Sony motion control stuff they announced at E3. That could bring new life to the genre as well.

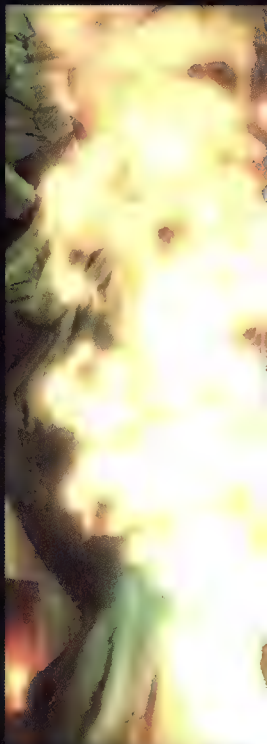
**What kind of role might motion controls play in music games?**

The obvious things would be like motion controls. The camera tracks you: you're doing stuff and your guy on screen is doing stuff now. Animation systems are pretty complicated and there's a lot of massaging of the data to go through, but that could be one. Also, if you look at our music studio, I could see *Minority Report*-style building blocks, putting musical blocks together in a virtual space and creating music really easily.

When I used to sit in middle school, I would always do drumbeats on the desk. So now with frequency analysis and the ability to map those frequencies to different samples, if you do this [drums on table with his hands] you can map this to a kick drum sample and this to a snare and have it in real time—we're playing a drum machine. So maybe there's a way to do that through audio. Or maybe if I hum something, it creates a melody and that becomes a building block that I can paste somewhere else. I mean, just integration between audio and motion control, we can take music creation and make it even more fun than we've been able to with a guitar controller. It's really fun to create music if you can remove the tedium.

**What kind of role do you think user-created content will play in the future? You obviously spent a good deal of time creating the new GH Studio, so do you think that user-generated content is going to help fuel the genre?** I think it can help. Fortunately and unfortunately, you need the big bands, the big hooks. You've got to have those "Sultans of Swing" and other songs that people gravitate towards. I think user-generated content can definitely help; I can see in the future: user-generated lightshows or "Let's design an arena" or stuff like that. I can see user content as kind of helping support the big songs that people like and the new songs that people either want to be exposed to or just knew.

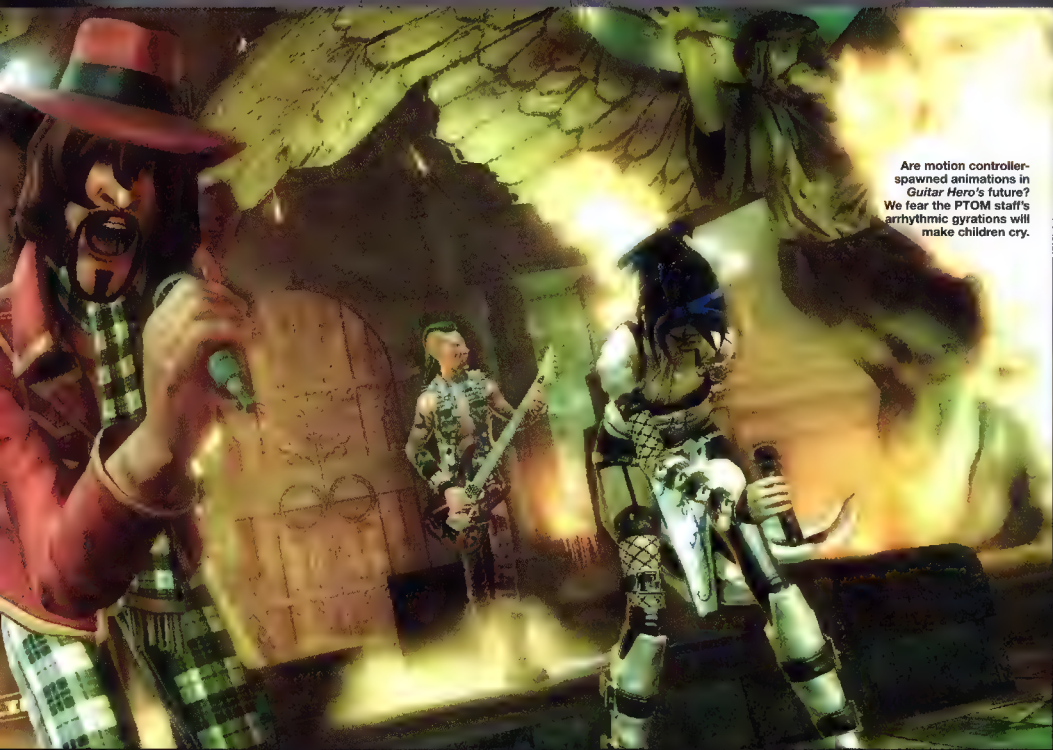
**What do you think of about band-specific games like *Guitar Hero: Metallica* and *Guitar Hero: Van Halen*? Do you think we're**



THE FIRST ONE  
IS ALWAYS  
THE HARDEST







Are motion controller-spawned animations in *Guitar Hero*'s future? We fear the PTOM staff's arrhythmic gyrations will make children cry.

"I think there are very few bands at this point that could carry a band game... There are certain bands I'd love to have a game all about, but I'm probably pretty niche."

going to see more and more games like those, or do you think those might play themselves out?

It's kind of uncertain. I think there are very few bands at this point that could carry a band game to the amount of sales that you need for it to be successful. There are certain bands I'd love to have a game all about, but I'm probably pretty niche. They have to be able to sell, they have to have a good back catalog, and they have to be willing to promote it. I guess there's probably an end to the number of band games you could put out there.

What do you think about games like *DJ Hero* that are moving in a

new direction and doing things differently from what's been established by *Guitar Hero*? Do you expect we'll see more and more games splintering off and doing their own thing?

I don't know that we'll see a huge plethora of games doing that. *DJ Hero* is particularly well suited because when you're DJing, it's a different mechanic. Having the cross-fader element separates it from anything else out there. It's a similar syncopated experience [to that of *Guitar Hero*] but it's different enough that it feels completely unique. Plus, that game is based on mash-ups, and mash-ups are very DJ friendly. I don't know how many other genres you can take that to. I don't see that

there's going to be a rush of new music peripheral games out if that game's a success.

Obviously you can't talk about anything too specific, but what's next for *Guitar Hero*?

We definitely have things we want to do and focus on in the future for *Guitar Hero*. Unfortunately, I can't comment on them [laughs]. Also, there's lots of great DLC coming out for *GH5*...I can't tell you about any of that either though!



# 7 TWICE AS MAD

We don't just test Mad Catz's new Round 2 controllers, we're giving 'em away



## Street Fighter IV Round 2 Arcade FightStick: Tournament Edition

MSRP: \$159.99 | URL: WWW.MADCATZ.COM

If you caught the review of the original Tournament Edition Street Fighter IV FightStick in our April '09 issue, you know we consider it one of the best home console stick controllers ever produced. Featuring components sourced from renowned Japanese arcade manufacturer Sanwa Denshi, there's no questioning the unit's quality, but there was some question as to how many people would be willing to pay its exorbitant price tag. When the initial run of 3,000 units sold out during pre-orders, Mad Catz had some scrambling to do to meet the unsatiated demand. Well, the Round 2 version of the FightStick TE has finally arrived featuring a new predominantly black exterior and more understated artwork. The Round 2 stick has a distinctly more mature appearance, which we favor.



## Street Fighter IV Round 2 Arcade FightPad

MSRP: \$99.99

Arcade-style FightSticks not your thing? You can still gain a competitive edge over your fighting game adversaries with Mad Catz's wireless FightPad controller. The FightPad's 8-way floating D-pad and classic button layout is a huge improvement over the DualShock 3's configuration when playing *Street Fighter IV*, as well as other old-school games ala *Sonic's Ultimate Genesis Collection*. Six new designs ensure you're looking stylish as you kick butt.



## Marvel vs. Capcom 2 Arcade FightStick: Tournament Edition

Talk about your fan service—when's the last time a company came out with a special edition controller for a PSN game? How about never? Okay, okay, so the game has a dedicated arcade follow-

ing, but the point is that if you're a *Marvel vs. Capcom 2* fan, your dream controller has arrived. Available exclusively from GameStop or either Capcom's or Mad Catz's online stores, it even features a slightly remapped button configuration to better emulate the *MvC2* control setup. Nice.



WIN!

## Mad Catz Contest

Thanks to Mad Catz's generosity, one uber-lucky PTOM reader will win a Street Fighter IV Round 2 Arcade FightStick: Tournament Edition and three other readers will each receive two Street Fighter IV Round 2 Arcade FightPads. Just send an email containing your name and address with "Mad 4 Mad Catz" in the subject line to PTOM\_editor@futureus.com. Entries must be received by November 30, 2009. One entry per person; multiple-entry spammers will be disqualified.

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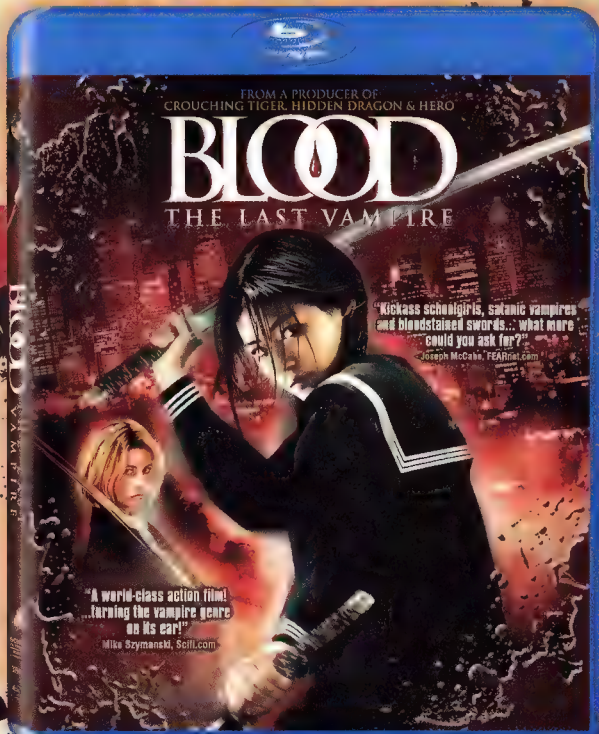
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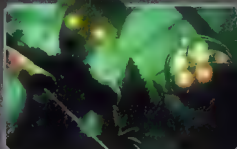
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Unconfirmed,  
unannounced, but  
definitely in the works



... ..

[illegible]

**And on Day 7** It's Treyarch's turn to own the CoD guns, but will the battle last beyond a few months or present?



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Source: *Journal of Nursing Management*, 1998, 6, 103-107.



1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 26



1000



Source: [www.fishbase.org](http://www.fishbase.org)  
 Includes 2000-2001 data on dry season's  
 impact on fish stocks



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**W**ith more than 200 titles in the BioShock 2 arsenal of weapons, we're set to fill in the holes left by the first game. BioShock 2 is already looking better than the first. We at PTOM always crave more. So we've done hours of dumpster-diving, rumormongering, and insider-cajoling spy work on the next wave of upcoming games. Are we heroes? No, just...well, yeah. Probably.

[illegible]

If confirmations are out of the question, semi-official teasers will do. 2K president Christoph Hartmann has quipped about a "follow-up project after *BioShock 2*." Lessee...three follows two, so...*BioShock 3*? Ubisoft's American CEO Laurent Detoc remains coy about *Beyond Good & Evil 2*, claiming "whether or not it comes out remains to be seen," but a teaser trailer and

Lastly, there are the random mutterings we hear about other notable names... Like *Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days*, which doesn't officially exist but whose title has coincidentally been trademarked. As for *Timesplitters 4*, reports of its demise may have been greatly exaggerated, as the ex-Free Radical team has been absorbed and relabeled as Crytek UK.

Yes, while still unconfirmed, 2010 is shaping up to be a mighty fine year.

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# 9 Incog-neato

Top secret ninja tricks you didn't even know your PSP could do



## Comics from the PlayStation Store

Alright, so you may have heard that you'll soon be able to read comics on your PSP, but did you know that once the digital reader launches in a Firmware update this December, Comics will actually get their own section in the PlayStation Store right next to Games and Videos? Sony has partnered with Marvel, IDW, IVerse, and others to secure literally hundreds of series for you to download once the store opens. And remember that these aren't some crazy motion comics—these are simply digital versions of the paper comics you already know and love. Hopefully the digital reader—which offers features like an adjustable page-turn effect and an “auto-flow” system that automatically moves the camera across each page in a way that mimics how you'd read an actual book—will keep everything legible and make purchase of these digital comics worth the money.

## Built-in Video Game Ratings Guide

Kids will hate it, but parents will love the ESRB Video Game Ratings Guide that comes pre-loaded on the new PSPGo. The guide gives an overview of the ESRB rating system with detailed descriptors on what the age-rated designations actually mean. Even more useful is the step-by-step tutorial that helps parents set the PSPGo's parental control features so that they can rest assured that Junior continues to get his fill of inappropriate content the old-fashioned way—from broadcast TV. No word on whether the Guide works on, or will be available for, older PSP models, but we can easily envision it being included in a future Firmware update.



## The PSP reads your mind (and digs your music)

Okay, that headline might be a bit of an exaggeration, but the truth isn't far off. A new music service called SensMe—which will launch in a Firmware update some time this fall—will actually analyze every sound file on your system and automatically categorize them based on ambience. When you select your current mood, SensMe will generate a random playlist to match it, complete with complementary background (like peaceful leaves or glitzy nightclub lights). You can also use the service to browse your albums by cover, create an instant playlist of your favorite tracks, shuffle and play all of your tracks, and check your most recently added music...but none of that's nearly as cool as the fact that your PSP will be able to analyze your music.

## Rental Rumor

Are downloadable game rentals in the PSP and PSPGo's future? There's been no inkling of an announcement or confirmation from SCEA, but one of the new features in the recent PSP Firmware 6.0 is the ability to group and display games within the Games tab by their *expire date*—a curious feature considering the only media that currently utilizes time-based licenses on the PSP is video rentals. This inconspicuous feature addition also seems to add further credence to rumors that Sony had pitched a monthly-fee based PSP games rental service to developers at the Game Developers Conference earlier this year.



# 10

# THE BURNING QUESTION

This month, we asked developers:

Have you ever included inside jokes, special hidden messages, or other little secrets in your games?



## INSOMNIAC, GAME DIRECTOR

Our longest running "special hidden item" has been the inclusion of Dan Johnson's likeness in our games. Dan was an artist that worked at Insomniac back in the early days on games like the first *Spyro the Dragon*. He had his likeness featured on everything from coins in a fountain to Wanted posters to texture maps on an alien flower. In our later *Ratchet & Clank* games, we had more blatant features of him like the multiplayer and single player skins and a "Snow Dan" (a snowman with his face) placed in secret areas. Sadly, Dan passed away in 2006. He was a very close friend of mine, and I will always remember him for his unique sense of humor and generosity.



## Okami

### PLATINUM GAMES, GAME DIRECTOR

If I were to pick my favorite, I'd say it's the dialect that Urashima uses in *Okami*. It's a regional dialect of Matsumoto city in Japan, where I'm originally from. Unfortunately, you cannot find this in "language localized" versions, but I have used names of places that really exist in Matsumoto for names of villages and places in *Okami* (such as Shinshyu, Sasabe, and Agata). We tried to keep these as much as possible during localization. *Okami* is filled with personal love for my home province. Besides, the reason why I started to create this game was from my feeling of nostalgia. This sort of pleasure is acceptable, isn't it?



## EA TIBURON, CREATIVE DIRECTOR

One of my favorite additions was the infamous "Sharpie" celebration from Terrell Owens. As most everyone remembers, after a TD against the Seahawks in 2002, TO grabbed a Sharpie out of his sock, signed the ball he had in his hand, and threw it to a friend of his in the crowd. Well, we on the *Madden* team always strive to be the most authentic game on the market, so we kind of silently slipped this into *Madden 2004*. We made it ultra rare; you basically had to re-enact the exact same situation, but it was still a nice hidden gem nonetheless. This year in *Madden NFL 10*, you might catch a quick glimpse of some dev team's PSN IDs on the backs of random fans' jerseys...so keep an eye out.

# ETCETERA

All the other stuff that delights the PTOM crew and distracts us from our work—'cause we fully acknowledge and accept our responsibilities as role models.



### Exo-flex console skins | Gear | \$20

No, you aren't going crazy—we did feature this exact same product last month. The problem was, we spelled the company's name and URL wrong and inadvertently sent a lot of you to a website about rubberized flooring. So we thought it only fair to give *Exo-flex* another mention. If you want to give your console a spiffy new look, head over to <http://exo-flex.com/store> and check out their creative-and-quality vinyl skins. At press time, only the original-style systems were supported, but you should see skins for the new PS3 "slim" any day—possibly even by the time you read this.



### TalkRadar! Podcast | Free on iTunes

Since we're always hangin' with the GamesRadar guys, we get unlimited access to their unique, irreverent take on everything gaming and pop culture. But Carlos the intern can't get enough, so he turns to TalkRadar for his two-hour-long podcasts. It's time well spent with game news, a humorous and sarcastic host, and interesting events from the week. Plus, you can hear the burping, farting, and other sophisticated sound effects that help Carlos maintain his edge.



### Batman: Arkham Asylum | Game | \$59.99

We usually hook Carlos the intern up with free games for all his hard work, but when a game like *Arkham Asylum* comes in, nobody seems to want to give up their copy—which means he had to spend his own money to score the game. But according to Carlos, the game wonderfully integrates aspects of the animated series with the serious and dark elements of the comic books. And with the special PS3 bonus content (the added Joker side-challenges, DLC, and Home content) it's hard not to buy the game.



### MapleStory | PC MMORPG | Free

Why is Teresa listing a free-to-play PC-only game as one of her obsessions this month? Because she's leaving PTOM to move to Los Angeles to work on that game and others by Nexon. Sae? She is, definitely, but commuting 300+ miles every week just to balance her work and personal life was burning her out. But she'll miss PTOM and all of you fantastic readers. "Keep in touch," she shouts as she walks out the door.



### Goozex | Website | PC per game trade

Most game-trading sites stink. Sure, they'll help you search for someone willing to send you a nice, played-upon *Batman: Arkham Asylum* in exchange for your beat-up *Fracture*, but there's the problem: that person doesn't exist. Goozex fixes that mess. Instead, you trade your copy of *Fracture* to one person and get points, which Goozex then lets you spend to get *Batman* from someone else. Each trade will cost you one dollar, but it's well worth it. Plus, you can trade for DVDs and Blu-rays now.



### King Dork | Book | \$12.99 (Amazon)

Technically, *King Dork* is a "young adult" book. Which basically means it's intended for high-schoolers. But Scott uncovered a serious loophole: we all went to high school at some point, and therefore, we're all perfectly well equipped to enjoy this humorous look at sex, homework, and rock 'n' roll. Anyone who's ever (1) wanted to start a band or (2) hated *Catcher in the Rye*, will instantly relate to the awkward plight of Frank Portman's outsider hero.



### Sugar Bowl Bakery Petite Brownie Bites | Dessert | \$7.99

Roger's a stickler when it comes to brownies. There's a certain confluence of flavor and texture required to meet his elevated standard—a standard that the Petite Brownie Bites from Sugar Bowl Bakery manage to meet with ease. Take three and heat up in the microwave for a few seconds and then adorn with a heaping scoop of vanilla ice cream for a taste of heaven. Roger gets his Brownie Bites from Costco, but they're available at many national grocery retailers. Mmm...he's gaining weight just thinking about 'em.



### VHS Tapes | Media Format | \$1

Obsolescence can be a glorious thing. Take VHS tapes, for example. This long outmoded medium lacks the convenience and quality of DVDs, but as a result, tapes are absolutely dirt-cheap. Check your local thrift store or record shop and you're practically guaranteed to find all your favorite movies from the '80s and '90s for as low as one dollar. Scott and his friends have amassed a fairly sizable collection thanks to this, and pretty soon, he's going to move on to that PlayStation 2 thing he's been hearing so much about.



### LittleBigPlanet | Game | \$59.99 Game of the Year Edition; \$47.49 Original edition

Since Roger's son Truman has finally moved on from *LEGO Batman* and has discovered *LittleBigPlanet*, Roger's been logging a lot of hours with the Sackadee. Nearly a year after release, the game still holds up and the skill and creativity displayed in some of the user-created levels is astounding. If you haven't yet experienced this world, the new Game of the Year Edition offers a great opportunity to score some additional bonus content while you drop in for a visit.



### TeressaDum | Twitter username | Free

Still missing Tizzy? The best way to keep in touch is to follow Teresa on twitter. That way, she'll still be able to keep in touch with the PTOM community. What would she do without all your angry letters and gushing praise? So, if you use twitter, go add teresadum right now and send her a farewell message. Just do it.

# Blu-ray Central

This month: Random selections, TV goodness, and a Santa-sackful of holiday cheer!

Guilty Pleasure of the Month (Possibly the Year)



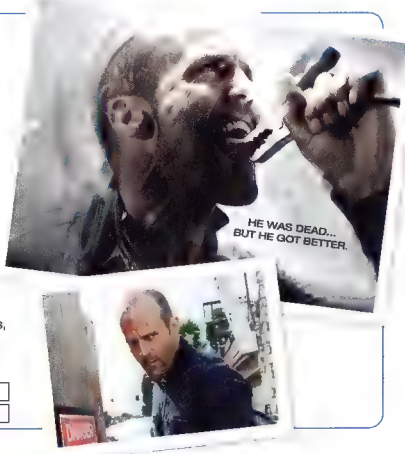
## Crank 2: High Voltage

PRICE: \$39.99 RATED: R

**[MOVIE]** Like some feverish ADD-added dream, one of the most improbable sequels ever is likely to polarize audiences even more than the original—which it outdoes in every possible way. An art house grunge experience masquerading as a grade-B action flick, *Crank 2* isn't a good movie in the traditional sense. The plot is insane and nearly incomprehensible, it tosses out characters and situations with no sense of direction or logic, and without care. What makes it so worthwhile for the right viewer is the cinematography and the movie's surprising, bizarre, and hilarious sense of style as it goes about its dirty, violent, sexy deeds. Is *Crank 2* a good movie? Maybe not, but as far as bad movies go, it's absolutely glorious.

**[EXTRAS]** Great commentary, picture-in-picture mode, and Lionsgate's usual healthy heaping of deleted scenes, gag reels, and making-of bits. You can also connect online for time and temperature widgets, screensavers, ringtones, and it'll even publicly shame you by updating your Facebook page.

MOVIE ★★★★★  
EXTRAS ★★★★★



## Adventureland

PRICE: \$44.99 RATED: R

**[MOVIE]** The biggest problem with *Adventureland* is right on the cover of the Blu-ray case—the part where it says "from the director of *Superbad*." Expectations were big for such a follow-up, yet anyone expecting more of the same brash, crude, and hilariously lewd humor will be sorely disappointed. *Adventureland* is funny, occasionally lewd, and an excellent coming-of-age comedy set in the '80s, but compared to *Superbad*, the movie is also nostalgic, quiet, and low key. Adjust your expectations, however, and it's a gem that deserves to get some attention on the small screen.

**[EXTRAS]** A mediocre collection of throwaway extras is saved largely by the excellent commentary.

MOVIE ★★★★★  
EXTRAS ★★★★★



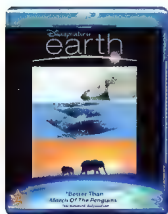
## Battle for Terra

PRICE: \$29.99 RATED: PG

**[MOVIE]** A cross between *Wall-E* and *District 9*, this CG spectacle is another sci-fi flick that essentially casts humans as the antagonists. The plot centers on a peace-loving, hippy race of floating aliens who must defend their planet from being terraformed by the last vestiges of humanity. The plot is a bit too disjointed and illogical at times to make it a classic, but *Terra* looks terrific.

**[EXTRAS]** In-depth, personable commentary, some interesting making-of and storyboarding features, deleted scenes, and a creepy CG director's intro.

MOVIE ★★★★★  
EXTRAS ★★★★★



## Disney Nature earth

PRICE: \$39.99 RATED: G

**[MOVIE]** A sort of greatest hits take on the BBC's superb *Planet Earth* series, Disney throw this great documentary into theaters, and on Blu-ray it shines. Focusing on the stories of a family of polar bears, elephants, and whales, the 90-minute spectacle has plenty of side trips to exotic locales and animals to keep the little ones occupied. It's also Disney-fied in its depiction of violence. Apparently, wolves and caribou only play tag with each other...y'know, for fun.

**[EXTRAS]** The picture-in-picture commentary is solid and informative, and the behind the scenes documentary footage is fascinating as well. The package also includes the DVD version.

MOVIE ★★★★★  
EXTRAS ★★★★★



## Fighting

PRICE: \$39.98 RATED: PG-13/UNRATED

**[MOVIE]** *Fighting* tries to be a lot like the original *Rocky*, if *Rocky* had been an untrained, two-bit street hustler and his manager was an outright con artist who sounds strangely like Rain Man. It's not a terrible rental, but don't expect a lot of amenities...like a logical plot, proper set-up, or too many good fights—although the final bout is excellent.

**[EXTRAS]** Deleted scenes. That's it.

MOVIE ★★  
EXTRAS ★

Blu TV



### Season One

**+** Tim Roth was always a great actor, but he's found the perfect niche on TV. The best of the new string of lie-detecting-based crime shows, and thoroughly worth watching on Blu-ray.



### Season Three

**+** So, remember when the creator of *Heroes*, Tim Kring, promised that season three would be a vast improvement over two? Yeah, he lied.



### Season Seven

**+** It's hard to believe this show made it eight seasons, but thankfully for fans, this season at least partially redeems the pondering pace and angst the show has been floundering in for the last few.

## It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like...



**+** It's a classic because it's awesome. If you don't like this movie, someone should shoot your eye out with a BB gun.



**+** A great movie handled badly on Blu-ray, it's really not even a step up from your dusty old up-scaled DVD. For shame, WB.



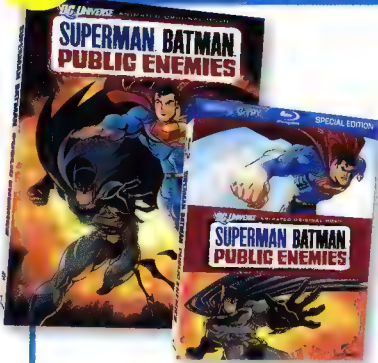
**+** Celebrating the holiday with vulgar, insensitive humor is always our preferred method, and Billy Bob agrees! Two versions of this yuletide classic on one disc, though the director's cut manages to be slimmer and darker than the unrated "Badger" version.



**+** A charming, if strangely off-putting (not even creepily digitized) Tom Hanks can stretch a kid's book into a full length film) CG holiday tale, with solid use of 3D and great presentation.

Jason D'Aprile is beginning to look a lot like Christmas too...everywhere he goes. Questions, comments, rants, raves? Email him! [PTOM\\_Blu-ray@futureus.com](mailto:PTOM_Blu-ray@futureus.com).

## Win Superman Batman: Public Enemies



"The World's Greatest Super Heroes become America's most wanted criminals and are hunted by friends and foes alike in *Superman/Batman: Public Enemies*, the sixth entry in the popular DC Universe Animated Original Movies series."

Sounds good, right? It became available on Blu-ray, DVD, and On Demand September 29, 2009, so you may already know the ending to this titanic team-up. Don't spoil it for us—we're hoping to win our own copy.

Where, you ask? Why, right here, of course. *PlayStation: The Official Magazine* is giving away five copies of this very movie on Blu-ray, courtesy of our fine friends at Warner Brothers.

You want in? Just send an email to [PTOM\\_PUBLICENSE@futureus.com](mailto:PTOM_PUBLICENSE@futureus.com) with the words "Superman and Batman" in the subject line by November 17, 2009. One entry per email address, please (see the rules below). It's literally that easy. A monkey could do it. Well, a trained monkey who knew how to type and had an email account, at least.

So what are you waiting for? Don't you have an email to send? Or a monkey to train?

TM & © DC Comics.

### Rules

No purchase is necessary to win and as a contestant you have not yet won. One entry per person; multiple entries will be discarded. Entries must be received no later than November 17, 2009. The winners will be chosen on or about November 18, 2009, and will be notified by email (or regular mail). The odds of winning depend upon the number of entries received. The sponsor of the contest is Future US, Inc. ("Future US"), 4900 Shoreline Court, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. Five prizes will be awarded. Each prize consists of one (1) copy of *Superman/Batman: Public Enemies* Blu-ray (\$29.99 value). Winners will be determined by a single random drawing of all valid entries and the decision of Future US shall be final. You may obtain the names of the winners by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the address above. This contest is open to residents of the United States only. Entrants must be at least 18 years of age. For a complete list of rules, go to [www.playstationthemagazine.com/officialrules](http://www.playstationthemagazine.com/officialrules)

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Fat Princess



MotorStorm: Generators



Madden NFL 10



SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo 3



Gran Turismo Sport



Assassin's Creed: Bloodline



Brain Quiz War



# Previews

First Look | Hands-On | In-Depth

## SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo 3

Hands-On

Putting the “team” back in “teamwork”

PSP AVAILABLE: Winter GENRE: Third-person Shooter PUBLISHER: SCEA DEVELOPER: Slant Six Games

**C**omputers are idiots. Seriously. Have you ever tried to play a squad-based shooter with a bunch of brain-dead artificially “intelligent” partners? Talk about a misnomer. To be fair, your virtual squadmates in previous *SOCOM* titles have actually performed admirably (considering the obvious limitations), but you know what’s way better than computer-controlled characters? Real people. The developers at Slant Six knew this of course, so they busted their collective butts to create four-player online co-op in *SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 3*.

You’ll be able to connect via ad hoc or infrastructure, you can join late or drop out at any time, you can chat through your Bluetooth

headset, and should you die, you can follow along in Spectator mode until you respawn at the next checkpoint. Your buddies can come along as you tackle all nine of the main story missions or as you replay the levels with new, customizable objectives and parameters—such as the number of enemies or enhanced difficulty.

But co-op isn’t the only new focus of this installation of *Fireteam Bravo*. You can also expect deeper character development and a more fully fleshed out story than in past *SOCOM* games. This time around, your operatives must locate an ex-KGB agent who may possess information regarding a potential terrorist attack involving WMDs, but who’s holed up in a former-Soviet

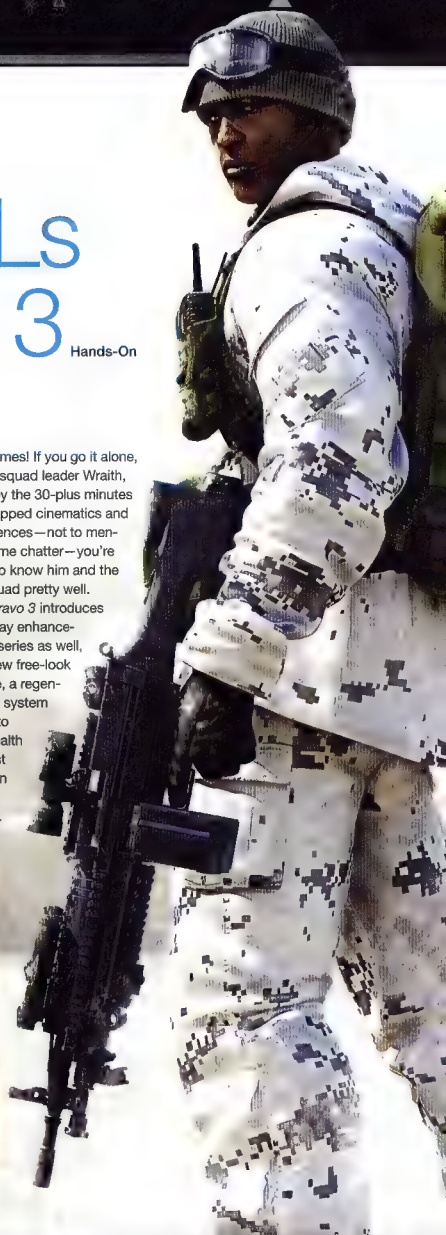
state. Good times! If you go it alone, you’ll play as squad leader Wraith, and judging by the 30-plus minutes of fully mo-capped cinematics and briefing sequences—not to mention the in-game chatter—you’re going to get to know him and the rest of the squad pretty well.

*Fireteam Bravo 3* introduces a few gameplay enhancements to the series as well, including a new free-look camera mode, a regenerating health system (as opposed to the classic health bar), and most importantly, an all-new fluid cover system. Basically, the

PSP



According to the devs, their tech will allow them to represent more enemies on screen than ever before, resulting in a more immersive experience.





Take cover and you'll heal; stay in the open soaking up bullets and your screen will turn redder and redder until you die.

controls don't change when you move behind a piece of cover; if you're locked on to an enemy and step behind, say, a crate, your avatar will intelligently adjust to the environment by leaning over or around the object. And once you release "Aim Assist," he'll automatically duck into a cover position. The developers hope this will enable you to utilize cover just as well as computer-controller enemies, who don't have to deal with having their heads blown off while fumbling with the controls.

### Armed and ready

Beyond these major modifications, much of the game remains the *SOCOM* you know and love. Single player largely consists of you and up to three of your friends methodically plugging bullets into every bad guy between you and your objective. You can, of course, approach this in any number of ways thanks to fully customizable loadout options, which now include more than 70 weapons and attachments. You'll gradually unlock new weapons and gear during the course of action, and you may also earn yourself a metal or ribbon—essentially an in-game version of Trophies.

And if you're more about competition than story, never fear,

*Fireteam Bravo 3* also offers a fully featured multiplayer mode. Up to 16 players can connect via ad hoc or infrastructure and compete on a host of brand new maps in any of five classic game modes. Naturally, you'll be able to customize your character (both appearance and loadout) with all the gear you earned in the Story mode.

We didn't have a chance to look and load in multiplayer, but we did play through a few single-player missions. Unfortunately, we didn't have any friends on hand so we were stuck with AI squadmates, but the command tools proved to be fairly intuitive. You can issue contextual commands by simply tapping the Circle button at the appropriate time (like when your crosshair is pointed at an enemy), but if you hold Circle, you bring up a menu in which you can alter your team's engagement type—from stealth to fire at will, for instance. In theory this should allow you to manage your team as much or as little as you like.

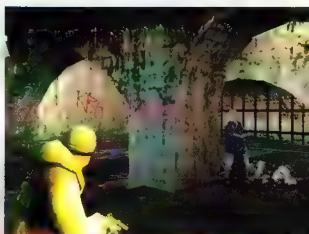
We stealthily guided our squad through a slate-gray backwoods base; rampaged our way through the city streets of some coastal European village; and haphazardly infiltrated a ridiculous mansion compound. The visuals put on quite a show, with impressive

draw distances and animations, and the controls, contrary to the problematic controls of *Slant Six's* last *SOCOM* title—*Tactical Strike*—held up nicely despite a bit of a learning curve. The Left-trigger locks the camera in place, allowing you to strafe and move much like you would you actually had a second analog stick. It's not perfect, but it works.

Considering all the new content planned for *Fireteam Bravo 3*, it looks like we may finally be getting the full *SOCOM* experience on a handheld...let's just hope the servers and the story hold up. —Scott Butterworth



Each weapon can hold up to five attachments and be modified for greater accuracy, punch, spread, and other attributes. Your rifle is your best friend.



If you neglect to bring extra clips along on a mission, you can simply pick up a fallen combatant's weapon.



You're always equipped with a pair of binoculars that can reveal hidden bonus objectives.



*Bloodlines'* two cities promise the same free exploration that made the first PS3 game great.



Altair's arsenal remains the same as in the first AC, but he's got a few new tricks this time around.

# Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines

Hands-On

Hooded badasses never die, they just go portable

PS3 AVAILABLE: Holiday GENRE: Action Adventure PUBLISHER: Ubisoft DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montreal

PS3 | P

If you were disappointed to learn that the *Assassin's Creed* series is moving on to a new setting and a new hero, take heart: Altair's not going anywhere. While *Assassin's Creed II* shifts the Assassins-vs.-Templar conflict to Renaissance Italy, Altair's own tale continues in the PSP-exclusive *Bloodlines*, which follows Altair and the other surviving Assassins as they flee the Crusades-era Holy

Land for the island of Cyprus.

Giving players two distinct cities—Limasol and Kyrenia—in which to roam freely, *Bloodlines* retains the ability to free-run up walls and across rooftops, as well as the ability to blend in with the (significantly smaller) crowds. The timing-based combat system from the first game returns as well, which will likely infuriate button-mashers. On the upside, *Creed's*

annoyingly repetitive side-missions—which had to be completed before assassination targets could be attacked—are being replaced with more diverse and less time-consuming objectives.

During missions, you'll be able to sneak past the guards (with radar assistance), run undetected along the rooftops, or just brute-force your way through. During our brief time with the game, we were

shown all three tactics, as Altair crept through shadows, silently stabbed guards with his hidden wrist-blade, and engaged in a few full-on swordfights. He then climbed up to a castle's ramparts, grabbed a guard while hanging from a ledge, and yanked him over the side to his death—a new move lifted from AC II.

The actual Templar targets at the end of each mission will put up more of a fight than their predecessors, as each represents a full-scale boss battle. In the one we saw, Altair battled Moloch "The Bull," a fat, bald giant who wielded an unblockable ball and chain that forced Altair to dodge or counterattack every strike. A little less realistic, maybe, but more variety rarely hurts.

Action aside, *Bloodlines* will focus not only on Altair but also on Maria, who fans might remember as the disguised Templar woman that Altair fights late in the game. She's still with the Templars, but you can expect her to evolve into a more sympathetic character in *Bloodlines*. The near-future storyline will return as well, but only to move Altair's plot along. Whatever the case, we're already eager to see how this half-step fills in the gaps between AC and AC II.

Mikel Reparaz



## Fight for the future

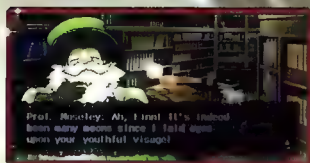
PS3 owners with *Assassin's Creed II* will be able to take advantage of a host of cross-platform unlockables by playing *Bloodlines*. By defeating bosses, Altair makes their weapons available for use by his descendant Ezio (although he can't use them himself), and any Templar coins collected in *Bloodlines* can be exchanged for currency in AC II. This isn't a one-way relationship, either, as any health or hidden-blade upgrades you collect in AC II can be carried over to *Bloodlines*.

# Adventures To Go!



## ADVENTURE SERVED YOUR WAY!

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# ALIENS VS. PREDATOR

As an Alien, you are the horror...

PS3 AVAILABLE: Holiday GENRE: Action PUBLISHER: Sega DEVELOPER: Rebellion

**A**liens vs. Predator is, essentially, three different games in one box. Four if you factor in the multiplayer, which is being kept tightly under wraps right now. You can play any campaign—Marine, Predator, or Alien—from the start, switching between them whenever you want. All three stories make sense in their own right, but it's only when you complete them all that you see the overall picture. What's more, each game will play significantly differently: you've got survival horror (Marine), first-person action game (Predator), and, er, another one. That would be the Alien campaign.

As a Marine, you don't have any fancy tech or sixth sense for seeing in the dark. Lay down flares, or prep for surprises.

Until now, the way the Alien plays is something developer Rebellion has been holding back. It is, without doubt, their trump card because it's so unlike any other experience on PS3. The Alien defies classification as a game character: it has no eyes, it can crawl across any surface, and it can perforate men with a single flick of its tail. "You notice that you're special right from the start. It's something we play on throughout the rest of the game," explains Alex Moore, lead designer at Rebellion, the team making AVP.

He's talking about your specific Alien character within the game—a creature created in a lab, bred to be genetically superior to other Aliens—but his sentiments also apply to the very notion of

playing as an Alien. It is, quite simply, something special and unique. Putting the player behind the eyes of an Alien—actually, scratch that, Aliens don't even have eyes—has been a big challenge for Rebellion, but it's the end result of their labors that will make AVP so different.

"It's more of an instinctive experience in many ways," says project lead Tim Jones. "You're searching out the more vulnerable, defenseless, unarmed characters who are being defended by heavily armed Marines or other aspects of the environment. So this makes game play more strategic and puzzle focused, rather than objective-based." This means leaping through vents, lurking in the shadows, and pouncing on passing humans from the ceiling—elements

you'd find more in stealth games than traditional action titles.

## A Matter of Perception

For the team, nailing the way the Alien perceives the world is key. If it isn't obvious that you can crawl through a certain vent or ambush a bunch of Marines who are cautiously creeping through the next room, the Alien gameplay will be something of a chaotic mess. So how do you do that for a creature with no eyes and no apparent means of visual communication? In terms of knowing what to do next, the game will provide visual clues and prompts from other characters within the world. "You'll be coming up against humans in the form of Marines and colonists, so what they say about



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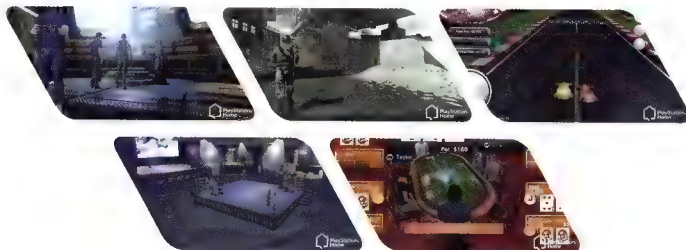
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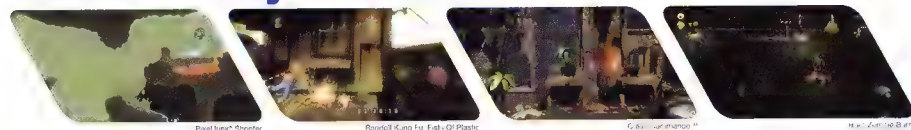


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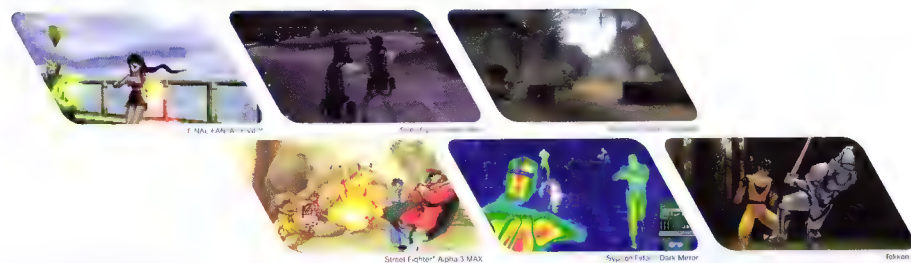
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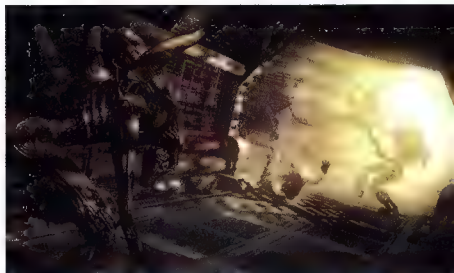
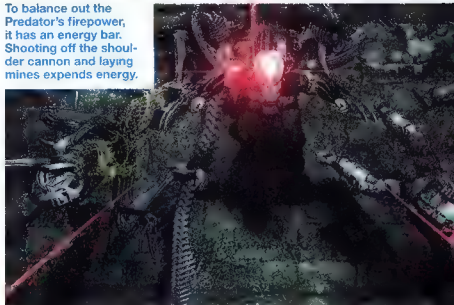
The Alien has no projectile attacks, it fights with its appendages. It scraps with teeth, claws, and a viciously sharp tail.

which is why Rebellion describes the Alien as "more strategic and puzzle focused." Other species rely on picking Aliens off at a distance—since your tail, claws, and jaws are deadly up close—but with the ability to crawl on ceilings and smell through walls, the Alien itself is the weapon.

Your overall objective is to expand your species, to spread the influence of the hive. It's very primal. Every stage is about survival (and not becoming the prize feature on a Predator's trophy wall), or tracking down humans to stick with a facehugger. That's right, you get to forcefully insert facehuggers down the gullets of terrified men. "When you find the right person, you can hold them down and introduce a facehugger to their face. The animation is pretty gruesome," says Jones before Moore chips in: "Compared to the facehugger animation, the Predator head-rip is looking quite tame..." Yikes.

But what's the story behind your character? Why are you a "lab-grown" Xenomorph? It's a secret that "justifies the Alien being alone through most of the plot," tease the developers—though you'll still mix with the hive. Provided it isn't too awkward or disorienting when you're on the walls and ceiling, this could be one of the PS3's most unique gameplay experiences. James Coates

To balance out the Predator's firepower, it has an energy bar. Shooting off the shoulder cannon and laying mines expends energy.



No eyes? No problem. The Alien navigates its world using a kind of sonar, and locates its enemies using pheromone tracking.

your actions and the things that they say to indicate what you should do next will contextualize what you're doing," clarifies Moore.

The Alien also uses smell as a practical but unique gameplay solution. Popular theory points to Xenomorphs using a mixture of sonar, telepathy, and smell to navigate. In the game, you'll be employing pheromone scent tracking to hunt prey. "Your pheromone vision mode will highlight characters and items of interest in the environment, like vents that you can leap into," explains Jones. You'll be able to detect enemies through walls with the pheromone mode—an ability no other species will have, and one that'll come in handy for setting up ambushes.

Staying hidden is the key to success,



The best thing about *Tony Hawk: RIDE*? Performing railsides without worrying about being nitted.



If you can't nail the trick, nail the look. There are 15 unlockable pro skaters in the game and the create-a-skater mode is the most complete yet for the series.

PS3 | P



No, you won't have to perform a real handstand to execute a handgrab, just a precisely timed combo of foot and hand movements.



The vert ramp action is simply awesome. The '80s fashions? Not so much.

# Tony Hawk: RIDE

Foot-On

Time to "hawk" your real skateboard

PSP AVAILABLE: November 17 GENRE: Sports PUBLISHER: Activision DEVELOPER: Robomodo

A couple minutes into *Tony Hawk: RIDE*, there's a moment when you wonder just how massive a poser you really are. After all, you can bust 900s all day in *Tony Hawk* games that use a standard controller—because even if you aren't hardcore about skating, you are hardcore about gaming. But this skateboard controller thingy; it still requires some balance and coordination. How lame do you look when you fall off a flat board that doesn't even have wheels?

But assuming for a moment that your friends' skills are as sketchy as

yours, the big news here is that this board-controller contraption actually works. Utilizing a combination of accelerometers and sensors, foot-inputs handle most of the basic moves like manuals, with

increasingly more advanced moves requiring precisely timed incursions into sensor "zones" with the hands. The three-tiered difficulty settings help familiarize you with the set up; Casual is rail-based to let you focus on learning the tricks, Confident offers the equivalent of a drive assist to steer you away from obstacles, and Hardcore dispenses with the aids and lets you at the courses unfettered. You'll struggle along for a bit, but your proficiency will improve as your *RIDE*-time increases.

The game features courses and environments in six regions with four locations per. We sampled Toledo, Spain and the concrete-encased Los Angeles River channel, but saw in-game listings for New York, Chicago, Tokyo, Barcelona, and Frankfurt, Germany as well. We also spent equal time bustin' and bailin' on a vert ramp, and as the screenshots reveal, there's an indoor level that's a veritable obstacle course. Most all the courses can be played in four



## Climb aboard

The board controller is the key to *Tony Hawk: RIDE*. Properly executed, it'll be an innovative control peripheral that offers a unique way to experience a skateboarding game. Poorly executed, it'll just be another over-priced hunk o' junk gathering dust in the corner with your other game-specific controllers. Here are three factors that'll make the difference:

- 1) Price**  
Pricing wasn't set at press time, but the talk was somewhere between \$100 and \$130. Make it \$99 for game with controller and we'll place a pre-order.
- 2) Performance**  
Does it actually feel like you're skating or merely standing on a flat board? Our limited foot-on time reveals that some semblance of balance is required, and yes, it does offer a sense that your foot-induced inputs matter.
- 3) Pliability**  
Skateboarders should bite with little problem, but investing in a *THR* board would be an easier sell if there were other games designed for the unique controller. Snowboarding and surfing are obvious candidates.

play modes: the race-based Speed Run, the self-explanatory Trick, the objective-based Challenge, and the Free Skate practice mode.

But it's the Party mode, where up to eight-players compete in a diverse set of trick, vert, and speed challenges via a single "hot seat" board-controller, that really captures the social aspects of skateboarding. When you're in the midst of hopping on and off the board, laughing and joking about the tricks you're attempting and failing, and trying to outdo your friend's sick fakie flip of a fatty gap, you actually begin to forget you truly are a wannabe. Until the next half-second when your buddies remind you. Roger Burchill

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ONE FINAL BATTLE...  
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Animated Blood  
Language  
Mild Fantasy Violence  
Mild Suggestive Themes



During flying missions, you'll be able to launch Daxter onto enemy planes so he can harvest their parts for health and cash.



# Jak and Daxter: The Lost Frontier

Hands-On

Boldly going where no ottsel has gone before...

**PSP/PS2 AVAILABLE:** November **GENRE:** Action-platformer/Flight **PUBLISHER:** SCEA **DEVELOPER:** High Impact Games

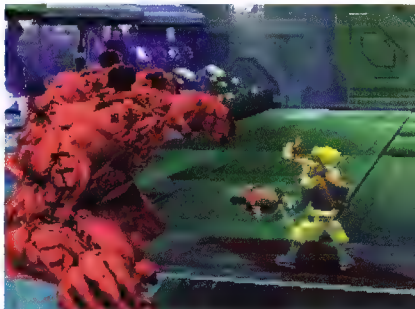
**J**ak and Daxter are back. Might be a bit hard to believe given the relative lack of fanfare heralding the revival of this iconic franchise, but indeed, *Jak and Daxter: The Lost Frontier* will be launching on your PSP (and PS2) in the very near future. Now, this may not be the next-gen title many of us so loudly hoped for, but *Lost Frontier* still packs a mighty platforming punch comparable to the PS2 adventures you so fondly remember. Oh, and there are planes. Lots of planes.

In fact, a full 40-percent of the game will consist of flying missions, according to the developers. You see, the story picks up right where *Jak 3* left off: When the essential resource Eco suddenly begins to disappear, the duo must travel

to the very edge of their world—accompanied, naturally, by their female partner Keira—in order to discover the cause. There they'll find fractured, floating islands and hordes of sky-faring pirates, both of which make airborne combat the only practical solution.

Not all the pirates you encounter will be the hard-talking, plank-walking type, though. The massive flying airbase of a pirate named Phoenix serves as storage space for your personal collection of jets, which you'll be able to browse in a lovely virtual hangar (far cooler than a "vehicle select" screen). There you'll be able to explore a host of customization options: You can purchase upgrades—such as improved turn rates and targeting systems—using "scrap metal" collected during missions. These enhancements can then be equipped to any ship. Once you're

► In addition to a few new attacks and maneuvers, Jak can now slow time thanks to a new ability called "reflexes."



done mixing-and-matching options to your liking, you can immediately take off for your next mission.

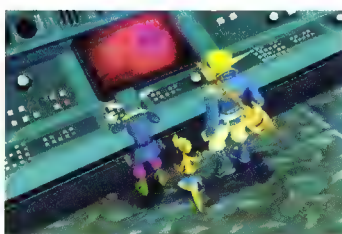
In our case, that mission was to search an abandoned barracks for a "special component." Unfortunately, the barracks' auto-defense system decided to wake up and attack us, so we had to put our dogfighting skills to the test. The infinite missiles and ammo certainly helped (even though they must be recharged if you overuse them), as did the basic maneuvers like loops and barrel rolls that were mapped to the directional buttons. Also, having Daxter serve as our personal

R2-D2—repairing the plane and spouting one-liners before launching himself onto a giant missile, which he disassembled in a series of quick-time events—really made the experience feel complete.

The other 60-percent of the game consists mostly of the classic action-platforming for which the series is known—though Jak has a few new Eco-charged moves up his sleeves and Daxter will, at some point, transform into a ridiculous beast called Dark Daxter. We imagine he will eat things...quite possibly including our faces.

Scott Butterworth

▼ The Hellcat is one of five jets found in the game. The number of upgrades, however, is far more extensive.





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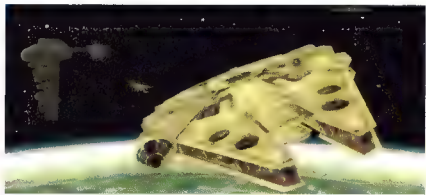
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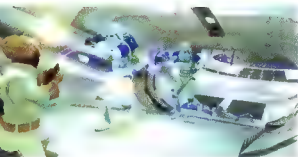


## Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron

Hands-On

**PSP AVAILABLE:** Fall **GENRE:** Action  
**PUBLISHER:** Lucas Arts **DEVELOPER:** Rebellion

Hot. Endor. The Death Star. All the classics. If you want to experience all the major *Star Wars* battles for yourself, the *Battlefront* series has long been the place to be. However, unlike previous installments in the franchise, *Elite Squadron* actually offers an original storyline set within the same timeframe as the movies. The campaign casts you as a Jedi clone named X2 who defects to the Rebel Alliance, but struggles to remain loyal to his twin brother, an Imperial Trooper. Of course, the Instant Action mode of the previous games hasn't gone anywhere, so if you want to skip the story and simply start whacking people with a lightsaber for points, you can. Plus, the levels this time feature "connected battlefronts"—meaning, for example, if you're fighting on the ground, you can just hop into a nearby X-Wing, fly into space, and continue the battle there while combat on the ground continues in real time. *Finally.* Scott



## Sakura Wars: So Long, My Love

First Look

**PS2 AVAILABLE:** Q1 2010 **GENRE:** Strategy RPG **PUBLISHER:** NIS America **DEVELOPER:** Red Company

In keeping with NIS America's well-established reputation for publishing offbeat Japanese games with unlikely-sounding titles, we have *Sakura Wars: So Long, My Love*—just your typical, run-of-the-mill strategy-RPG...set in an alternate-history 1920s New York City full of transforming mechs piloted by cute, can-do anime chicks who fight demonic evil by night and perform Broadway stage musicals by day. Read that again.

*Sakura Wars'* Battle Mode eschews the traditional, straight-up turn-based battle scheme in favor of a more fluid system based on Action Gauges—energy bars that can be spent (or not) to move, guard, heal or attack—and further shirks tradition by setting the action in fully 3D gridless environments wherein players can move freely.

While not swinging a bit sword in mech form, players must manage the interrelationships of their team members, since team-combo effectiveness in battle is directly affected by said relationships (as is the quality of the Broadway musical performances the player must help stage—yes, seriously). Dialogue-based decisions and special-encounter side-quests round out the many anime-inspired cutscenes (fully voiced in both English and Japanese). Only in New York, right? Chris



## Dead to Rights: Retribution

Hands-On

**PS3 AVAILABLE:** Q2 2010 **GENRE:** Shooter  
**PUBLISHER:** Namco Bandai  
**DEVELOPER:** Namco Bandai

It would be easy to overlook this near-future shooter, in which a gritty cop patrols a decaying city spilling over with crime and corruption. Easy except for one thing: your dog. Part wolf, part Alaskan Malamute, and 100-percent canine wrecking machine, Shadow may be the most copable canine sidekick yet seen. He can stealth-kill an enemy of your choice, drag a targeted foe out from behind cover, maul baddies to death all on his own, and fetch weapons while you stay behind cover. He even has his own playable stealth sections.

The two-legged action is a bit more typical, but it looks well-crafted. The low-level thugs are pushovers, but the soldiers of a well-funded private militia are another story. They're smart, they pack big heat, and they know the same disarm moves as the player, so they can swipe the gun right out of your hands and unload it into your brain from point-blank range. *Erie*



## Ride to Hell

Update

**PS3 AVAILABLE:** 2010 **GENRE:** Action  
**PUBLISHER:** Deep Silver  
**DEVELOPER:** Deep Silver Vienna

The oh-so-subtly-named *Ride to Hell* is a sandbox-style, free-roaming game that revolves around the "biker culture" movement—or at least a romanticized version of it as enshrined by Hollywood, most notably in *Easy Rider*. "Grand Theft Chopper"? Not exactly, but it's a good mental jump-off point.

Starting with little more than a motorcycle and a nothing-to-lose attitude, you explore the sprawling environments of a 1960s "Road-Trip America," a sort of condensed reproduction of the American Southwest and its various set-pieces: the open highway, the lawless desert, the hippy commune, and of course, the unsuspecting quaint little town ripe for the picking by roving motorcycle gangs.

You can join up with a "family" (well, okay, *gang*) of other bikers, hitting the virtual road with a vast number of vehicles and jaw-dropping numbers of possible variants of customizable motorcycles. The law is one possible hazard in this world, but so are rival gangs and all manner of sleazy individuals. Naturally, it's all set to licensed music from the period (at last count, the tunes numbered in the hundreds) and is about as M-rated as it gets. Those bikers are a rough bunch, man. *Chris*



THROUGH DARKNESS, ALL THAT MATTERS IS WHAT



PS3



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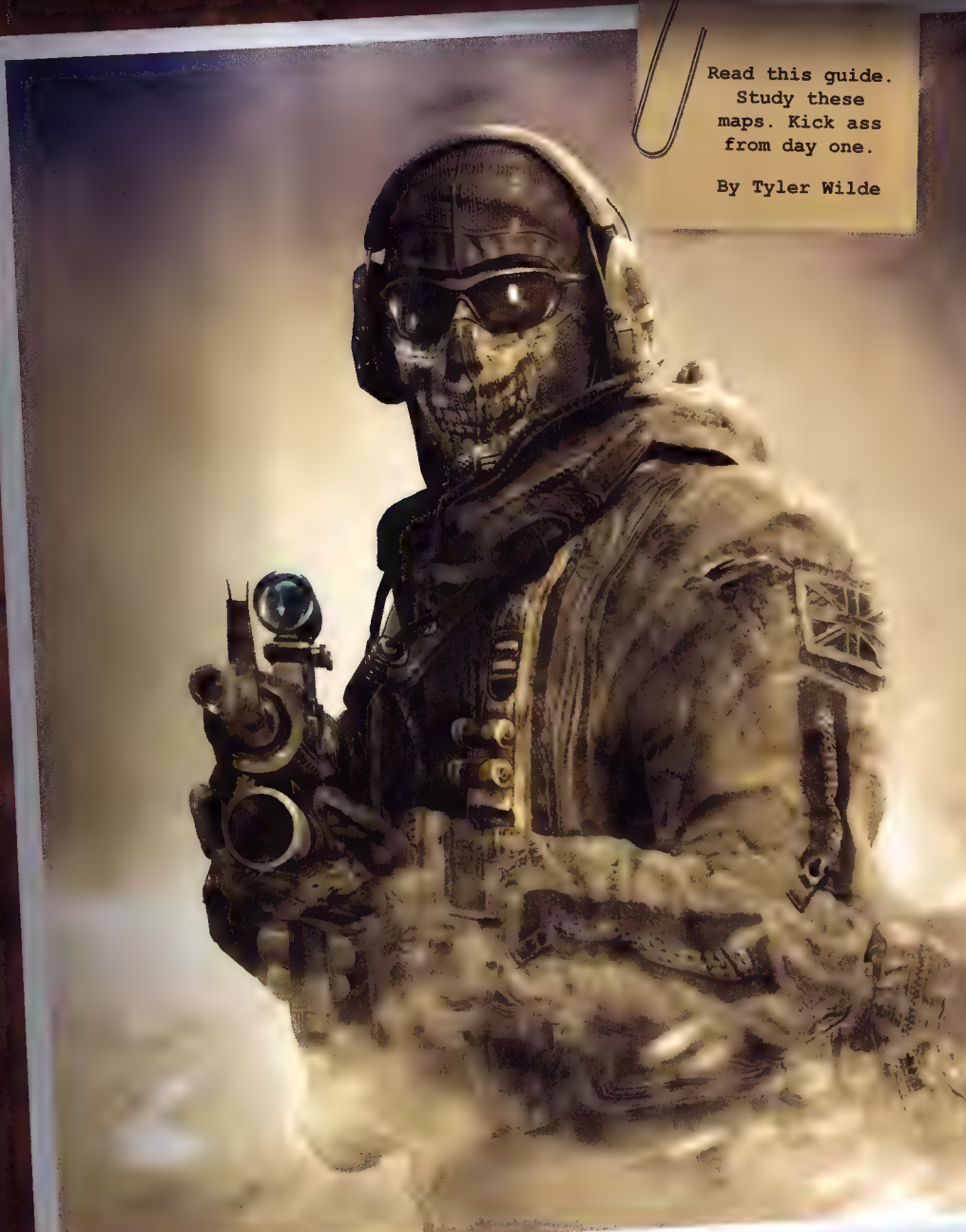
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A full-page photograph of a soldier in tactical gear, including a skull-patterned mask, goggles, and a headset. The soldier is holding an assault rifle with a flashlight and a laser sight. The background is a hazy, yellowish-brown environment. A yellow sticky note with a paperclip is in the top right corner.

Read this guide.  
Study these  
maps. Kick ass  
from day one.

By Tyler Wilde

SUBJECT:

# MODERN WARFARE 2

## MULTIPLAYER BOOT CAMP

DETAILS:

Information is the most powerful modern weapon in existence. Walk into battle without a scrap of quality intel and you won't walk out alive...and you sure-as-hell won't walk out dead, unless you turn into a zombie or something.


There are no zombies here. Modern Warfare 2's multiplayer will be massive, and it will be mean, but with a little pre-launch homework, you can own the leaderboards while the uninformed blindly wander into vicious choke points, becoming walking bullet repositories for you and your superior intel to exploit.

ANALYSIS:

We aren't just dropping an early view of four Modern Warfare 2 multiplayer maps; we're delivering a comprehensive collection of tips and secrets shown to us by the very people who developed the game. We spent hours slinging bullets with the designers and coders themselves while absorbing insider information from Infinity Ward's Community Manager, Robert Bowling. Lucky us, and lucky you--you've got a head start. Use it wisely and let everyone else spend their first week of MW2 catching your bullets with their faces

ACTION:

continue TO NEXT PAGE:  
TO THE MAPS



## BASIC TRAINING

Before we tackle any terrain-based strategy, we've got to lay down the basics. *Modern Warfare 2* is not just *Call of Duty 4* with new maps. If *CoD4* is a brick wall, *MW2* is the same wall; only it's twice as high and shoots fly-by-wire missiles at you. This game exudes newness, and you won't get very far if you don't understand the new weapons, perks, and everything else you can use to your advantage.

AFGHAN MAP



## BASIC TRAINING TIP

### ATTACHMENTS

Don't ignore weapon challenges! Your weapon attachment inventory has received a major upgrade, and unlocking all of them is more worthwhile than ever. The various camouflage styles of *CoD4* were nice, but *MW2* brings attachments that are undeniably more useful. They're no longer just physical objects or properties—attachments can now refer to abilities, such as Akimbo (dual-wielding), and Rapid Fire... way cooler than any "Digital Camo." Also included are thermal scopes, heartbeat sensors, tactical knives, and suppressors for

### ROBERT BOWLING'S CUSTOM CLASS

While he was showing us a few of his favorite tricks, we asked Robert, our personal expert-for-the-day, what his standard weapon and perk loadout looked like. He's a fan of the traditional run-and-gun style, as well as Hardcore matches, which limit the HUD, increase damage, and require a bit more caution. Once you level sufficiently, you may want to try the personal class of a *Modern Warfare 2* dynamo



#### Primary Weapon:

Bushmaster ACR with a red dot sight and suppressor

#### Secondary Weapon:

Not specified

#### Special Grenade:

Syntex ("Because I like to stick people!")

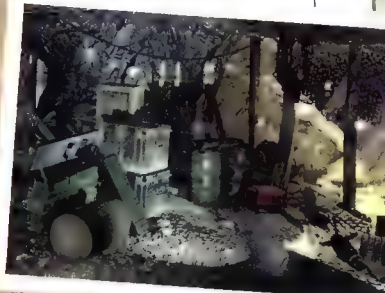
#### Perk 1:

Bling (To facilitate having two attachments on the ACR.)

#### Perk 2:

Commando (Increases melee range.)

Infinity Ward's us, and lucky ely and let ing your



## AFGHAN MAP

Each side of this rocky desert wasteland is fairly defensible, but given all of the narrow entry passages, one good enemy rush can trap you and your team in your base, where you can wind up frantically swatting at multiple enemy flanks. The middle of the map, however, is nice and open, and the ruins of an ancient jumbo jet provide ambiance and a little cover. But be warned: get caught out in the central area and you're a sniper's dream (especially due to the overlooking bunkers), so either bolt through or take the long way around. While not the most secret-laden map, there are a few tricks and quirks to Afghan that can give you the advantage.

- 1) **HIGH LEDGE** This high ledge is a great sniping spot, and it's made better by the pile of mattresses beneath it. Your cushiony friends below make a normally deadly fall survivable, creating a quick getaway route, especially if your opponent doesn't know the trick and hesitates.
- 2) **BUNKER** The cliff top bunker here is a great spot for long-range defense, but like any stronghold, someone will come along and clear it out every once in a while. Stay vigilant.
- 3) **CAVERN** This roomy cavern leads directly to one of the flags in CTF matches. It is the most obvious entryway and is thus a poor route to launch a real attack. However, with a riot shield and some guts, creating chaos in the cave is a great way to distract defenders while your teammates sneak around from one of the side entrances.
- 4) **GAS TANKS** Use your environment! A pile of explosive gas tanks here can be used to scatter attacker's limbs like Jenga blocks. If for some reason you're completely out of ammo, a strange quirk will cause the tanks to explode if you jump on them from enough distance and height. That'll surprise 'em (and kill you).
- 5) **COCKPIT** The cockpit of this bit of wreckage is a good place to hide when defending the bombsite within it. You're backed into a corner and exposed to grenade attacks, but headstrong enemies will often run into the plane too quickly to catch you before you aerate their chests with bullets.

## SUPERIOR FIREPOWER: REAL-WORLD STYLE

Many games get the "same old controller with custom graphics" treatment, and there's nothing wrong with that. But for *Modern Warfare 2*, gearhouse Mad Catz has teamed with CoD developers Infinity Ward to conceive an optimized gamepad with special abilities that could actually give you a leg up.

The secret is that this pad, which comes in two camo patterns, has a couple extra buttons on its underside, which you can tap with your middle fingers. One mimics Square, Triangle, or R3, and the other will duplicate X, Circle, or L3. And you can adjust these selections on the fly.

What's the point? This enables you to hit facebuttons without taking your thumb off the analog stick, or perform those tricky stick-clicks without the risk of accidentally changing your direction or aim. Sure, it's a subtle thing, but in combat this finely tuned, it could be the difference between sniping fools with an AC-130's main gun and watching some tool drill you in the forehead because you stood still for a split-second to hit the reload button.



## BASIC TRAINING TIP

### PERK UP, SOLDIER!

*Modern Warfare 2's* perks are more varied and more powerful, and they deserve careful consideration. Play around with different combinations as you unlock new abilities to find one that suits you best, but don't play around too much—it's actually in your best interest to stick to your favorites for a while. Each perk now has a specific challenge which, when completed, unlocks its "pro" version. You can't see what the pro version does before you unlock it, but you can bet that it's probably worth it. Here are just a few of the new perks you'll be playing with.

**Scavenger** Always running out of ammo? Like having plenty of grenades at your disposal? Scavenger auto-grabs ammunition from corpses as you run over them.

**Bling** Use two attachments on one weapon—no more choosing between red dot scope and grenade launcher; you can have it all!

**Commando** Add a little lunge to your knife-play and increase your melee range.

## HIGHRISE MAP

1 BEAMS

2 INTERIORS

5 PASSAGEWAY

4 SCAFFOLDING

6 PARKOUR OPP

3 INTERIORS

## THE TOP 5 PERKS OF WORKING AT INFINITY WARD

During our all-too-short visit to Infinity Ward's offices in Encino, California, we were treated to a full tour of their facilities, from the sound stage where the character's voices are recorded, to their '80s-themed kitchen complete with Pac-Man cutouts and a Michael Jackson Thriller poster. The following five enticements made the plane ride back home a slightly more somber affair.

5. Big, cushy sofas in every work area. We think we may have seen a massage chair somewhere too—who knows, it's all a blur now. We're sure that their lush comforts are used primarily for brainstorming sessions.

4. All the free soda you can drink, and snacks as far as the eye can see. We slurped down Mountain Dew and Diet Coke like there was no bloated, over-cafeinated tomorrow, and took copious bathroom breaks as a result.

3. A ping pong table, pool table, and more arcade machines than you could beat in a day. We hear that *Street Fighter* is the game of choice when employees get a chance to relax...though *Street Fighter* tournaments might be more riotous than relaxing.

2. A proper gaming theater, complete with cushy seats, cup holders, surround sound, and a screen that puts our measly little HDTVs to shame.

1. Working at Infinity Ward. Cheesy, but true.



## HIGHRISE MAP

The uncharacteristic, but entirely welcome setting--the roof of an unfinished skyscraper, and parts of its interior office space and access passages--makes Highrise a gem of a map. It's also full of strategic quirks, choke points, and sniping spots if you know where to look for them. Expect average players to hover around the interior sections at opposite sides of the map, and run through the central throughways.

1) **BEAMS** These suspended beams can (and should) be utilized, though don't run around on them for too long as they offer little cover. What they do offer is a path to the second floor of the northern interior, which is a great place to hunker down and practice your marksmanship. You can leap onto one of the beams from the helipad on the right side of the map.

2/3) **INTERIORS** The two opposing interiors offer some extra-personal combat. Stay in a crouch and sneak through the cubicles--anyone who foolishly lets their head stick out above one of the half-walls can easily be fragged to pieces through the thin dividers (watch as papers go everywhere--it's beautiful). Shotguns (remember, these can be secondary weapons now) are particularly effective. And remember to use your environment when the opportunity arises--a large copy machine will explode after being beaten into submission, just like cars.

4) **SCAFFOLDING** A bit of scaffolding gives you access to a barely perceptible ledge that runs along the side of the building, which is an excellent secret route for carrying flags or bombs in objective matches. Even if the enemy kills you while you're carrying the objective, they'll have a tough time retrieving it from its perch, giving you and your team the opportunity to catch them while they're distracted.

5) **PASSAGEWAY** There's a passageway (not visible) which runs across the entire map, from the northern interior to the southern. Here, in the middle, an opening exposes the passage to the air, making lower-level travelers vulnerable for a second. This isn't the most secretive route--everyone knows it's there--but if you're lucky, you'll make it to the other side and pop up behind the opposing team without tipping anyone off. Slaughter time!

6) **PARKOUR OPE** There's a piece of scaffolding hanging about 10 feet from the edge of the building here. If you enjoy a little parkour, and don't mind dying a few (or several) times, you can leap from the building, grab onto the scaffolding by pressing the Jump/Action button, climb it like a ladder, shimmy across a sliver of a ledge, walk up another piece of scaffolding, and reach the roof of the southern interior--the highest point on the map. You might also find a little surprise up there... (Heh heh, we know something you don't.)

## BASIC TRAINING TIP

### RIOT CONTROL

Stuck in a rut and need a change from the usual run-and-gun? Replace your primary weapon with a riot shield and become an imposing, tough-as-hell distraction while your teammates pick off opponents. Used well, the riot shield isn't just a gimmick; it's a vital tool for distracting enemies and capturing objectives. Oh, and you can bash the hell out of people with it.


Community Manager Hoel Bowling noted that if, during a capture-the-flag match, you approach your enemy's flag with your shield out, grab it and switch to your alternate weapon, you'll stow your shield on your back, covering your ass while you run for home base.

## BASIC TRAINING TIP

### SECOND TO NONE

Good news, everybody! Secondary weapons aren't just limited to pistols anymore. Machine pistols, shotguns, and rocket launchers are among the new weapons you can have at your hip—no perk required. Shotguns make especially good secondary weapons for maps that contain a notable mix of close and long-range environments, and snipers should be especially happy, as they can start off with some additional close-quarters firepower. Rocket and missile launchers are tactically useful for taking down pesky UAVs, helicopters, and AC-130s—a well-timed missile may just make you the hero of your team.

2)  defeat out

3)  launch chao team

4) 

FAVELA MAP



10 feet from  
the building, grab  
it like  
a piece of  
highest point  
leheh, we

## FAVELA MAP

Favela is a challenging map. The term "favela" means "shantytown," and shantytowns are full of tight corridors and blind corners. The trick with objective-based matches is to know when to stick to the cluttered streets and when to rise to the rooftops. It's much easier to lose pursuers on the streets--every time they unload a round you're already around the next corner. There's less cover on the rooftops, but travel is faster and you can cover larger areas of ground. In general, use the low ground for offense (e.g. carrying a flag) and the high ground for defense, but break that rule if your opponents seem to be neglecting either area. In Team Deathmatch and Free-for-all, your verticality will depend on how you like to play.

- 1) **LARGE STREET** This large street is the biggest open area in the map, and darting through it can be dangerous, since it's easily covered by the nearby rooftops. Use the cars as cover and weapons, and avoid sticking around for too long.
- 2) **SHORTCUT** You can leap the gap between these buildings--a shortcut used by Robert to reach the larger building without exposing himself for too long. Going unseen is a key to succeeding in this map.
- 3) **HIGH-POINT** This building is the highest point on the map, and can be used to cover a lot of ground--just watch out for any crack shots on surrounding buildings.
- 4) **STREET MAZE** Rooftop snipers will have a harder time picking you off if you stick to this street maze. You can spend the whole match in the central section and still see a lot of action.



## BASIC TRAINING TIP

### SPECIAL NON-GRENADES

In order to provide more gameplay variety, and (Infinity Ward hopes) provide skilled players with alternatives to grenade spamming, the devs have provided us with a slew of new equipment that can be placed in your special grenade slot. Among them are Symtex sticky grenades, throwing knives, blast shields (masks which offer added protection from explosives), and our personal favorite: Tactical Insertion. What is it? It's awesome, that's what it is. Throw down a special marker and you'll respawn at your chosen point--unless another player destroys it. There's nothing like spawning directly behind the guy who just knifed you in the back. REVENGE!



## BASIC TRAINING TIP

### GOING STREAKING?

Everything that wasn't customizable in *CoD4* is now customizable. Your kill streak rewards aren't static anymore—at level 10 you'll start to unlock new rewards which you can drop into one of three available slots. If you consistently score long chains of kills, you may want to forgo rewards like the UAV, and strive for more challenging and deadly rewards. Your three default kill streak rewards are:

**UAV (3 kills)** The same unmanned aerial vehicle from *CoD4*, which scopes out the battlefield and reveals your enemies' positions. The catch? In *Modern Warfare 2*, they can be shot down. In fact, everything can be shot down.

**Care Package (4 kills)** These are more useful than you may initially expect. Throw down a special smoke grenade and a package of goodies will be airdropped over your position. Your reward might be something as simple as an ammo refill, or something as immensely desirable as an instant advanced kill streak. What makes them "more useful?" Everyone, including enemies, can see the drop location on their radar and grab the package if they get there first. Meanwhile, you're hiding behind a rock waiting for fools to rush in and score a date with the business end of your rifle.

### Predator Missile (5 kills)

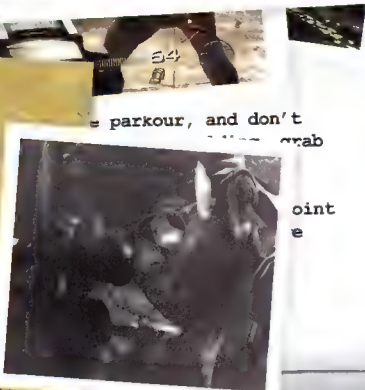
Try not to hit yourself as you guide a fly-by-wire missile from the heavens to the ground. It's very effective, and scores you an excellent view of your enemies' positions for some bonus intel.



## HIGH-LEVEL STREAKS

If your kill streak rises above five, there are plenty more rewards to be unlocked, including Sentry Gun, Counter-UAV, and the crowd favorite: the formidable AC-130. Remember the mission in *CoD4* in which you took control of an aerial cannon and blasted the hell out of little glowing targets on the ground? This is that, only better, because you get to take out your buddies as they flee from the rooftops in search of flimsy, useless cover. Suckers...

But wait! As they say on TV, "There's MORE!" Some matches are just bad—you're out-of-sync and can't get back into the game. So after three consecutive deaths, you get a little boost—a Death Streak reward! Your first available reward is Copycat, which allows you to steal your killer's class during the Killcam. Copycat is particularly helpful for new players who are scooting around with a basic class wondering why everyone else's weapons are so much more badass than theirs.



scaffolding, a ladder, shimmying on the scaffolding, and on the map. You know something

parkour, and don't grab

point  
e

## ESTATE MAP

This is a curious map. Its setting is reminiscent of Creek from the CoD4 DLC, but it plays very differently. At the southern end of the map is a large, two-story estate house, which tends to become the centerpiece of every battle (hence then name). It is defensible, but not hard to infiltrate once you know the tricks, and when you're in, it's easy to create a lot of confusion (smoke grenades help). Outside of the buildings, the map is wooded and encourages long-range combat and a lot of sprinting.

- 1) **SIDE ENTRANCE** The house has several entrances, and most of which will get you killed most of the time. However, come around to the side and you'll find a pile of logs that create a convenient ramp up to the second floor. Anyone inside will probably be focused on defending the doors or peering into the distance and looking for heads to snipe, so your surprise attack has a decent chance of wreaking a little havoc. Any way you enter, it's rarely a bad idea to toss a stun grenade in first.
- 2) **GREENHOUSE** The greenhouse next to the estate gets a lot of traffic, so it would be wise to lurk around behind it waiting for battles to erupt inside. Running directly through it can be dangerous, but most of the paths to the estate are dangerous, so that's pretty unavoidable.
- 3) **GULLY** The central gully and path to the house is a popular one, but it can also be well covered by anyone on the second floor of the house. You'll see a lot of the map's action in this area, which either means that you'll avoid it or gravitate to it, depending on how frantic you like your matches.
- 4) **ROOF ACCESS** Yet another pile of logs on the back of this shack provides easy access to the roof, where large portions of the map can be covered. If you're running near the area, remember to glance up in case you're being scoped out by a prone sniper.
- 5) **THE LONG WAY** This side of the map is the least used, and is the safest, but longest, way to approach the estate.
- 6) **POWER STATION** The power station doesn't get a whole lot of action, but it can still be a dangerous place. Watch out for snipers on the building at number 4, and be wary of running up the central path at number 3, as that tends to end in a flurry of gunfire and a respawn.

## BASIC TRAINING TIP

### IDENTIFY YOURSELF

*Modern Warfare 2* rewards you for hard work—it's not just about your kill count. Everything you do that makes a difference is noted. But what's the point if no one else sees that you're the one who busted your ass to shoot down the enemy's UAV or distract would-be flag-grabbers with your riot control skills? A little blip on the screen isn't nearly enough credit, so Infinity Ward has given us big, spacious plaques with which to create our personas and notify everyone of our victories. As you level up, you'll unlock new titles, emblems, and back-grounds (try your homeland's flag, for starters). There are hundreds of unlockables to use, and we estimate (with our undeniable mathematical prowess) there to be at least one gazillion potential combinations. Your unique identifier could make you a *Modern Warfare 2* celebrity, assuming you play obsessively enough.




## SPECIAL OPS: THE NEW MODE

*Modern Warfare 2* contains a third mode, entirely separate from the single-player campaign and standard multiplayer mode. Special Ops is designed especially for co-op (though it can be attacked alone), and consists of various challenges that are not dissimilar to the short airplane mission unlocked at the end of *Call of Duty 4*. The challenges aren't complex (get from point A-to-B, kill everyone in the map, and so on), but they're more than just an arcade distraction. Each mission has three stars (one for each difficulty level) and given the number of missions we saw in the list, completionists will be kept busy for some time.

We also got a look at a round of Breach & Clear (as played by our courteous host, Robert), which began with the dramatic, explosive breach of what appeared to be a Soviet prison. Robert slaughtered about a dozen-or-so soldiers, grabbing new weapons and riot shields as he adjusted the strategy of his attack. The onslaught of soldiers appeared suffocating for a minute, but alternating between gusto and caution, Robert picked off, knifed, and blew the crap out of the entire building before jumping in a hole to evade the torrential rain of bullets. Victory!

# THINK YOU'RE READY?




Call in air support? AH-1Z attack helicopters will unleash hell from the sky, but you'll have to eliminate any AA threat before they can move in for the kill.

Advance your fire-team through the tree-line in combat formation? Use cover and fight for every inch of territory where just one bullet can kill...

Call in off-board support? Identify targets covertly then order a mortar barrage to obliterate enemy positions. Command will only authorize a limited number of strikes, so use them wisely...





Flank right and take the high-ground? Deploy your sniper to eliminate Anti-Tank squads from distance to allow M1A2 Abrams to roll into the valley

Order your fire-team into the M3M (GAU-21) equipped HMMWV to draw out and assault PLA forces... but risk becoming a high-priority target for AT threats?

OPERATION

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**DRAGON RISING**

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MATURE 17+



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Violence

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# NOISE

## GRAVITY KILLS

AND SO DO HEADSHOTS AND SHATTERED SPINES

PS3 Available: 2010 | Genre: Action | Publisher: Namco Bandai | Developer: Saber Interactive



# INVERSION

BY CHRIS ANTISTA

Imagine flying freely just above the earth's surface. The captain has turned off the gravity and you're free to float about the atmosphere. So serene, so calming, until... INCOMING FIRE! Hate to shatter the tranquility with a hail of bullets, but that's precisely the experience *Inversion* has in store for you. The planet has suddenly been invaded and Old Man Gravity, tired of being so predictable, has just thrown up his hands and said, "Screw it. Let's party." So put a clip in that assault rifle, and get ready to blast your way through normal, sideways, inverted, and zero-G. Somebody needs an ass-kicking, and you're not going to let something small like a total meltdown of the very laws of physics stand in your way.

Due from publisher Namco Bandai sometime this year, *Inversion* is being developed by Saber Interactive, known for infusing traditional genres with fresh concepts. Remember 2007's underrated *TimeShift*, in which the player adjusted the flow of time to solve puzzles and divvy out murder? It's those guys.

But now Saber's focusing upon an all-new form of havoc. Not only will *Inversion* present visuals worthy of a technical powerhouse like the PS3, it'll also bring the kind of destructible environments countless games have promised, yet never truly delivered. How do we know? Well, it's pretty easy to get an up close and personal look at the splintered debris of a war-torn city when it's floating around you on all sides.





### Gears of War

From the cover system to the sprinting to weapon selection, *Inversion* takes more than a little inspiration from the game hardcore PS3 loyalists will hate us even mentioning.



### Army of Two

Whether you're playing single player or co-op, Russel and Leo also do the Bromance Dance by helping each other onto and over tough spots.



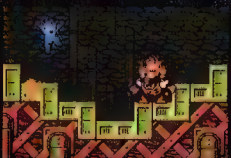
### Star Wars: The Force Unleashed

Thanks to *Inversion*'s Grappler weapon, even those with a Midi-chlorian deficiency can send victims soaring with a raised hand.



### Dead Space

You'll bounce between bosons of matter like a zero-G ninja, only more frequently and with a helluva lot more ammo.



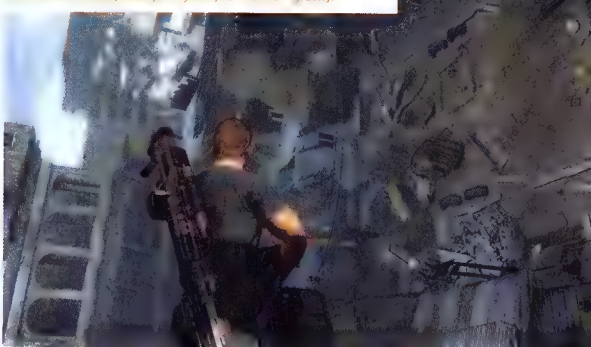
### Mega Man

Much like the Blue Bomber, Davis Russel earns powerful game-altering weapons from bosses he defeats. Well, one at least.

Just where the Lutadore come from is still being kept under wraps. We're told their not aliens, but publisher Namco Bandai wouldn't say more. Something's definitely up.



You're walking on the wall here. Imagine a shootout with enemies still on the ground, with all the odd angles and curious physics involved—for instance, a thrown object like a grenade would curve when moving from your gravity to "normal" gravity.



### MASS INVASION

When something as wild as gravity manipulation comes into play, you're usually in a galaxy far, far, away. Not the case here. *Inversion* occurs in an earthly place and time far closer to our own (though Namco Bandai refused to confirm it was the Earth or present day). This makes the events surrounding protagonist Davis Russel all the more unsettling. Seemingly out of nowhere, Russel's world is invaded by the Lutadore, a species of merciless, hyper-aggressive humanoid. Millions of innocent people are slaughtered, and the survivors are rounded up into concentration camps. Russel is among this number, but his wife is executed before his very eyes and his daughter abducted. How's *that* for motivation?

As Russel, you manage to escape captivity with the help of your kindly and playable neighbor Leo Delgado,

and together you fight your way through the remnants of a fallen society. Talk about an atmospheric setting; We've been fighting aliens and conspiratorial corporations for so long that the tonal simplicity of a dire struggle for survival is a welcome one indeed.

Small squads of rag-tag resistance fighters provide a sliver of hope for humanity's survival, but you'll only align yourselves with their cause when it's to your immediate benefit. Because while the Lutadore's motivation isn't exactly clear, yours is crystal: Find your little girl and kill any muscle-bound bastards that stand in your way.

### GRAVITATIONAL PULL

As if the setting weren't bizarre enough, the Lutadore's arrival coincides with the appearance of gravitational anomalies around the planet, and this is where *Inversion*'s defining characteristic comes

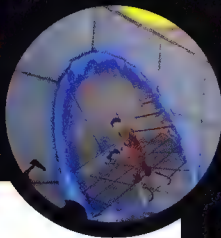
When hit with the Grappler, enemies will usually float only briefly. Once they get their bearings, they start shooting again.



As Russel, you manage to escape captivity with the help of your kindly and playable neighbor Leo Delgado, and together you fight your way through the remnants of a fallen society.



# DISORIENTATION 101

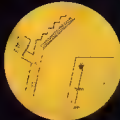


## Portal

Just like *Inversion*, gravity can be your ally in *Portal*. But if you can make it through this short masterpiece, you should have no trouble acclimating to an altered perspective.

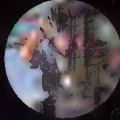
## Echochrome

Similar to *Inversion's* vector changes, this PS3/PSP game gives you the god-like ability to flip, twist, and pivot entire stages at will. If nothing else, it'll show your game that reality and physics are all just a man-made illusion.



## Heavenly Sword

One of *Kat's* missions had her hanging down from a moving conveyor while sniping people with a crossbow. Could star this and you should be a crack shot no matter which way the sky's facing.



## Grand Theft Auto V

Okay, we'd never encourage this in any other context... but we're going to tell you to drink the *Grand Theft Auto V* kool-aid for its surprising the legal limit and you want that a soldier guy with the camera takes a turn.



## Armed and Dangerous

In addition to the shank gun, this criminally overlooked shooter includes a weapon that turned the entire world upside-down for a split second—just long enough to give you a full 180-degree turn, so it could all come crashing pointedly back to terra firma once the planet righted itself.



## Batman: Arkham Asylum

So, like, Batman's got a grapple, too... And there's also, like, this hallway that bends when you're on Scarecrow's fear toxin... Okay, so there's a lot of ways you can turn the game around, so you can see the game right now. JUST PLAY IT! IT!



That is what's called a gravity inversion. Think of it as a giant, debris-filled snow globe in space, but with more ways to die inside.



into play. Within these shimmering spheres—at times as large as entire buildings—gravity is just gone. Trust us, you can't miss 'em. Just look for the colossal blooms encasing floating debris, beads of water, and more gloriously to the point: You and some pretty vicious firefights.

Firing your assault rifle will propel you in the opposite direction of your target (sort of like the *WALL-E* movie's fire extinguisher scene.) This can work

in certain situations, but as baddies swarm on all sides, it's best to take cover behind a floating object using your Grappler weapon, which works like a Force-powered hookshot.

Small bits of debris can be pulled towards you and even fired back at enemies for a quick kill. On the flip side, you'll be drawn towards more massive objects, such as refrigerators and clothes dryers, but the simple duck and cover method just won't do as you're basically vulnerable on all sides.

Luckily, *Inversion* makes it a snap to vault around in 3D space and move from one side of an object to the other. If a Lutadore is pelting you, it's simple to zip to another object, flip around so you're hiding behind it, and lay down some suppressing fire.

But it's not all weightless floating; the majority of *Inversion*'s gunplay will find Russel and Delgado (who is always with you, controlled by either a friend or the CPU) with their boots squarely on the ground. Although, we

**PTOM:** There was a PC/360 title called *Prey* that did the variable gravity thing already. How will *Inversion* be different and better? **Matthew Karch:** *Prey* looked great, it was fun to play and innovated in some cool ways, there were situations in which the floor would flip and you'd be upside down. The mechanics were interesting and we've varied that up a bit. We've got a lot of confined environments (a spaceship) with minimal physics interactions other than a player and camera shift.

In *Inversion*, we have a similar concept where the world will literally shift on its side or upside-down and the player's entire orientation will change. But this happens both indoor and outside. When a 90-degree vector change happens on a city street in *Inversion*, the whole world literally falls on its side. Cars, debris, garbage cans, squid-rat-ies and enemies—anything and everything floating in the air will be tumbling down. The floor will now become the floor building which has a large number of other gravity elements that *Prey* didn't explore as a mechanic. Concepts such as creating high-gravity and low-gravity fields, combating enemies that can control gravity, navigating in zero gravity environments, and manipulating objects that are floating in zero gravity are mechanics unique to *Inversion*.

One other key difference is camera. We felt that a game that featured gravity as a key mechanic would benefit from a third-person perspective. Players will want to see their character float in zero-G and to use floating cover from a third-person perspective. For *Prey*, first-person was the right choice. For *Inversion* and its broader approach to gravity as a mechanic, third-person makes more sense.

**Are there any popular depictions of gravity in movies that bother you? Something inaccurate you think of?** Yeah, I don't know if you saw the movie *Space Buddies*—it's that Disney movie with the puppets that can talk and like to chat while floating in zero gravity. That wasn't very convincing. I am not sure if it was the puppy astronaut concept or the fact that they talk, but I would rather avoid that comparison if at all possible.

## ONE BIG QUESTION AND A SECOND STUPID ONE



Matthew Karch,  
CEO of Saber Interactive

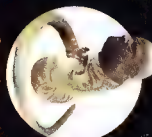
# MOMMY, WHERE DO LUTADORE COME FROM?

No ideal scenario was light-lipped on the specifics regarding their origins, sort of hinting that the Lutadore weren't exactly alien, but snapping short-circuited their brains and they were human. Our brains took it from there.

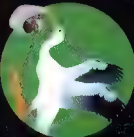
Cabbage patch



Generation (Chasubuster)



Stork



Mad Science



Air conditioning ducts probably degrade quickly when under fire, but when you're walking on a wall, you can't be too picky about cover.



You'll find that firing your assault rifle will propel you in the opposite direction of your target (sort of like the *WALL-E* movie's fire extinguisher scene.)

mean "ground" figuratively—whatever phenomenon is responsible for the gravitational anomalies also produces events known as Vector Changes. These are basically gusts of gravity "wind" that flip gravity upside down, sideways, or even back to normal if it's already wacko. When a Vector Change hits, you're lifted momentarily into the air and then sent "falling" onto whatever surface has become your new "down"—even if it was previously a wall or ceiling.

If targets are on the same plane as you, fighting from these unusual angles is similar to fighting in normal gravity, except that wall-mounted structures like air ducts and fire escapes now form the terrain and provide your cover. But when occupying different gravities—you on the "ground," enemies on the "wall" or "ceiling"—it's like playing a murderous game of paintball in an M.C. Escher illustration.

Best of all, with your feet firmly rooted on any surface, you can use your Grappler weapon like you're a Sith Lord—lifting aggressors off the ground, levitating their cover or even throwing them into a different gravitational field to a very confusing death. One of the cooler touches we witnessed was that objects in the environment are yours for the weaponizing, too. A personal highlight was having Russel lift a car into the air and repeatedly smash it into ground enemies like a handle-less mal-let of Looney Tunes proportion.

## WREAKING HAVOC

As inventive and creative as it is, *Inversion*'s anti-grav cache isn't its sole redeeming characteristic. The game looks to have a strong shooter foundation completely apart from its gravitational activism. It seems to have taken a page from *Gears of War*, by emphasizing decidedly non-superpowered men who are severely outnumbered and burdened by heavy weaponry. Lest you accuse us of accepting Microsoft bribes, though, we also think *Inversion* could do it one better in the cover department.

A powerful piece of under-the-hood middleware called the Havok Destruction Engine enables you to rip an environment to shreds. Cars explode, gunfire wears down cement, and sandbags in a pile can actually be shot off individually. But that could all be window dressing if it doesn't enhance the gameplay. Fortunately, this same detail-oriented approach went into how Russel reacts to cover being destroyed. He doesn't just sit there and expose the meaty parts of his head as a thousand rounds-per-second chip away at his concrete barrier. Instead, he intuitively adjusts his position to stay out of the line of fire, even on the move. Plus, you've got the ability to create new cover by picking up any of about a billion objects in the environment—you can even Grappler-launch them into anti-grav inversion zones. So even when the odds are cruelly stacked against Russel, you can give yourself a fighting chance. Good hopes for *Inversion* are justified, after all,



It's pulling inspiration from some awesome games (see Recipe for Success, pg. 56). But *Inversion* has also added fresh and exciting mechanics all its own. Call it a gimmick if you want, but you'll have to wait until the final product before we'll let you call it gimmicky. ■

The shiny globes in this shot are water from those barrels. You'll be able to move 't over fire and then drop it to douse the flames.

# Batman: Arkham Asylum The Mega Guide

**B**atman: Arkham Asylum isn't just a great game—it's a great BIG game, full of badass bosses, riddles, and more hidden items than a prison mailroom. But we're here to help you find it all. On the following pages, we'll reveal how to defeat every big bad guy and locate every treasure in the game.

**ONE NOTE:** Certain items can only be obtained using a specific gadget, so watch for particular words that signal which one you need.

**Grapple** = Batclaw

**Ultra-grapple** = Ultra Batclaw

**Detonate** = Explosive Gel

**Hack** = Cryptographic Sequencer (sometimes upgraded version is needed)

**Zip** = Line Launcher

## Arkham Island, East

**SECRETS MAP** • **Hack** into the ground floor guardroom closest to the statue of Warden Sharp.

**RIDDLE #1** • In the cemetery, look for the open, sunken grave with a headstone shaped like an "A." Zoom in and scan the face of the stone.

**RIDDLE #2** • Find Wayne Tower on the horizon, zoom in and scan the giant "W."

**RIDDLE #3** • A ? puzzle. Climb to the very top of Arkham Mansion's tallest tower and face south. Line up the dot on the floor and the symbol on the roofs below to form a question mark, then scan.

**INTERVIEW #1** • Located in the southern guard tower on a desk.

**INTERVIEW #2** • Catwalks link the two towers. There's an office where they meet. **Hack** the door to find an interview.

**CHRONICLE #1** • Left of the Mansion stairs is a courtyard. **Grapple** over the wall, drop down and check the right-hand wall for a tablet.

**CHRONICLE #2** • Face the Garden staircase from the graveyard. There's a destructible wall. **Detonate** or **ultra-grapple** it for the tablet.

**TRPHY #1** • On the jetty overlooking Gotham harbor. It's near the southern view of the water, close to the Arkham Mansion stairs.

**TRPHY #2** • At the back of the graveyard, near the cliff shore.

**TRPHY #3** • Left of the Mansion stairs is a courtyard. Go over the wall and **grapple** to the upper balcony. Behind the column is a trophy.

**TRPHY #4** • In the narrowest part of the roof separating the northern and southern halves of the mansion.

**TRPHY #5** • In the shack, in the middle of the cemetery.

**TRPHY #6** • **Grapple** to the top of the mansion's tallest tower and check the side with the clock.

**TRPHY #7** • While on the tallest tower, look toward the circular tower. There's a rectangular recess you can glide to.

**TRPHY #8** • Located on top of the northwestern guard tower, closest to the Arkham North door.

**TRPHY #9** • Left of the Mansion stairs is a courtyard. **Detonate** the destructible flooring at its center.

**TRPHY #10** • **Hack** into the ground floor guardroom closest to the Arkham Mansion stairs.

**TRPHY #11** • The guard towers are linked by catwalks. Where they meet, there's an office. **Hack** into it.

**TEETH #1-2** • After the story directs you to the Mansion's main entrance, these appear halfway up the stairs.

**TEETH #3-4** • These appear at the foot of the long stairs heading toward the Gardens while you're looking for Harley's fingerprints.

**TEETH #5-6** • In the more southerly guard tower of Arkham East.

**TEETH #7-8** • These appear on the stairs to the Gardens after Ivy turns the sky red.

**TEETH #9-10** • Near the door to Arkham West, close to a ground-level guardroom. Appear after you shut down the Titan pumps.

## Arkham Island, West

**SECRETS MAP** • **Hack** the door to the ground-level guard room halfway between the Medical Facility and the Penitentiary.

**RIDDLE #1** • Above the door to Arkham East are two concrete rafters. **Grapple** to the second one and use detective mode to find a destructible barrier in the cliff face on your left. **Ultra-grapple** it and scan the gas canisters inside.

**RIDDLE #2** • Climb the stairs to the left of the main Penitentiary door. On the balcony above, use the upgraded sequencer to **hack** gate and, once inside, scan the card table and dead guards.

**RIDDLE #3** • A ? puzzle. The top swirl is on the floor in front of the main Penitentiary door. The dot is on the railing of the balcony above, so **grapple** up, look down and shift your view to make the question mark.

**INTERVIEW #1** • There's a shack on the Penitentiary side with a tape inside.

**CHRONICLE #1** • Underneath the Penitentiary balcony is a destructible arch. **Grapple** up and **detonate** it.

**TROPHY #1** • Underneath the guard tower.

**TROPHY #2** • **Grapple** to the top of the Arkham North door.

**TROPHY #3** • On top of the dock house next to Gotham Bay.

**TROPHY #4** • To the right of the Arkham North door there's a waterfall. Drop down.

**TROPHY #5** • On the southwestern section of the Medical Facility's roof.

**TROPHY #6** • Behind bars in the passage between Arkham East and Arkham West. **Grapple** to the ledge above the bars, **detonate** the destructible floor and drop down.

**TROPHY #7** • Near the front entrance to the Penitentiary it will read "Cell Block" above the door. **Grapple** the wall grate to the right.

**TROPHY #8** • Find the elevator in front of the Medical Facility. **Hack** the panel and lift the elevator.

**TROPHY #9** • Climb the stairs to the left of the main Penitentiary door. On the balcony, use an upgraded sequencer to **hack** the door and walk in for a trophy.

**TROPHY #10** • Go to the northern end of the Medical Facility roof and **zip** to the alcove across from you.

**TROPHY #11** • In front of the door to Arkham East look directly above you. **Ultra-grapple** the destructible panel and climb up.

**TROPHY #12** • Halfway along the passage connecting Arkham West and Arkham North are some concrete rafters. **Grapple** up, **ultra-grapple** the wall grate and retrieve the trophy.

**TROPHY #13** • This trophy is in the passage connecting Arkham West and Arkham North. Near the northern end there's a destructible wall patch. Pull it down and **grapple** up.

**TEETH #1-3** • Outside the main door to the Medical Facility. Grab 'em on your way to rescue Commissioner Gordon.

**TEETH #4-6** • After you beat Bane, these appear in the tunnel connecting Arkham West to Arkham North.

**TEETH #7-8** • Inside the guard tower in front of the Penitentiary. Get them while following Warden Sharp's DNA trail.

**TEETH #9-10** • Once the Titan pumps are down, these appear in the passage between Arkham West and Arkham East, before the door to the East side.

## BOSS BEATDOWN #1

### Deformed Joker Henchman

Here's your first real test. Pay attention to this freak's patterns: you'll face many more goons just like him over the course of *Arkham Asylum*.

► If the henchman picks up a body, keep diving to the left and right (with a double-tap of X) to avoid getting struck.

► The beast will roar when he's about to charge. Now's your chance. Tap R1 to throw a quick, well-aimed Batarang.

► Immediately dive to the side. If the Batarang strikes true, your foe will clatter into the wall and let you punch him while he's dazed.

► Don't panic—keep punching them when they fall to one knee and you'll get to ride them like a cheeky cowboy.

## Arkham Island, North

**SECRETS MAP** • The eastern office building in this area has a destructible roof. **Detonate** it to get inside.

**RIDDLE #1** • Head north to Arkham's main gates. To your right will be a see-saw. Scan the whole thing.

**RIDDLE #2** • **Hack** into the western ground floor guardhouse. Enter and scan the "Vote Dent" posters on the wall and desk.

**RIDDLE #3** • A ? puzzle. Stand underneath the arched entrance to the dilapidated building and look up in detective mode.

**INTERVIEW #1** • There's a tape atop the western guard tower.

**INTERVIEW #2** • **Hack** the western, ground-floor guardhouse and retrieve the tape.

**CHRONICLE #1** • Look up and right while entering the crumbling building west of the main asylum gate. There's an alcove containing the symbol.

**CHRONICLE #2** • Visible on your first trip to the Batcave.

**TROPHY #1** • **Grapple** onto the roof, in the section left of the Arkham West door. Cross the shingles on your left.

**TROPHY #2** • There's a building to the west of the main asylum gate. Enter it and look to your left.

**TROPHY #3** • Glide down from the roof of the eastern guard tower, onto a rocky plateau.

**TROPHY #4** • On the roof of the guard tower closest to the Arkham West door.

**TROPHY #5** • On your way to the Batcave, you'll enter a room with some skulls. **Detonate** the right side wall.

**TROPHY #6** • Between the two guard towers is a destructible floor panel. **Detonate** it and drop into the hole.

**TROPHY #7** • Facing Arkham's main gate, there's a guard office on the left. **Hack** its door with the upgraded sequencer.

**TROPHY #8** • Stand inside the guard tower closest to the Arkham West door and look west towards the cliff. **Zip** to the alcove.

**TROPHY #9** • Directly below trophy #7, **ultra-grapple** the destructible wall.

**TROPHY #10** • Above the entrance to the Batcave is a tunnel. **Grapple** to find the trophy.

**TROPHY #11** • Head to the Batcave entrance. **Grapple** up twice, but before heading through the steel door, turn around. **Ultra-grapple** the destructible wall.

**TEETH #1-3** • In front of the door to Arkham East, after surfacing from the sewers.

**TEETH #4-6** • Breaking back into Intensive Treatment, you'll have to get past this sniper station. Climb a guard tower and **zip** to the platform. Take out the sniper and claim the teeth.

**TEETH #7-8** • Near the door to Arkham East (after Poison Ivy fight)

**TEETH #9-10** • On the western guard tower (after Poison Ivy fight).

## BOSS BEATDOWN #2 Bane

Big brute Bane's the man who broke Batman's back in *Batman #497*. Not this time.

► Bane's tackled in exactly the same way as the giant henchman. Just use the Batarang when he charges.

- Don't bother attacking Bane until one of his segments is depleted. Once that happens, run in and keep punching.
- Rip the venom tubes right off his back to weaken him. Sadly his punch is still pretty powerful even without the tubes...
- Keep countering the goons that attack and watch for Bane's charge. Launch a Batarang and dive when it comes.
- Bane will occasionally grab chunks of wall and hurl them. Just dodge to the side to avoid. You'll have plenty of time to prepare.
- One last thing: You'll use this same strategy later in the game against the Titan Henchmen. Be ready!

## Arkham Mansion

**SECRETS MAP** • In the Warden's office, on a desk against the wall, is the secret map.

**RIDDLE #1** • There's a short hallway that leads from the Main Hall to the South Corridor. On the left wall is a portrait of Commissioner Gordon. Scan it.

**RIDDLE #2** • On your way to Dr. Young's office, you should come across a jail cell with spiral text written in dizzying circles on the walls. Scan those spirals.

**RIDDLE #3** • When trying to find a way into Dr. Young's office, you'll notice a wall of morgue drawers. Only one's open. Scan the cadaver.

**RIDDLE #4** • Get inside Dr. Young's office and scan the skull-like face hanging on the wall.

**RIDDLE #5** • A hallway you pass through while tracking Dr. Young's fingerprints holds several display cases. Scan the one with umbrellas inside.

**RIDDLE #6** • While traveling through the East Wing corridor, look out for a display case in the shadows. Catwoman's mask and clawed gloves are inside—scan them.

**RIDDLE #7** • In the Warden's office, scan the case containing the Scar-face puppet.

**RIDDLE #8** • Hack the southern door in the Records Room and zip across the electrified floor. The files for Professor Hugo Strange are on your right as you enter.

**RIDDLE #9** • A ? puzzle. Above one of the western display cases is the top of the ? Turn around and zip up to the air vents to find the dot.

**INTERVIEW #1** • (Main Hall) Inside the eastern guardroom, accessible through the grate.

**INTERVIEW #2** • (Dr. Young's Office) On the desk you pass on your way out of Dr. Young's office.

**INTERVIEW #3** • (Library) Entering the Library, walk left around the circle. Hack the security door with the sequencer and take the tape.

**INTERVIEW #4** • (West Wing Corridor) On the western wall (at the top of the stairs) is a destructible patch. Ultra-grapple it down and retrieve the tape.

**INTERVIEW #5** • (Records Room) There's a vent on the eastern wall in the southern wing. Ultra-grapple it open. Grapple up and follow the ducts to reach the tape.

**CHRONICLE #1** • (Mansion Entrance Hall) Between the Main Entrance Hall and the Main Hall is a locked door. Grapple in via a ceiling duct. Halfway along, detonate the destructible wall.

**CHRONICLE #2** • (Main Hall) In the northern section of the room, zip up to the balcony near the pendulum.

**CHRONICLE #3** • (S. Corridor) Halfway along the eastern side of the hallway, you'll see some complex air ducts. Grapple there and detonate the destructible wall.

**TROPHY #1** • (Mansion Entrance Hall) Through the grate to the right of the first set of stairs.

**TROPHY #2** • (Main Hall) There's a grate and book. The trophy's inside.

**TROPHY #3** • (North Corridor) After the jail cell with spiraling text on its walls, Grapple up to a wall grate to a large room with ceiling fans. Continue forward and look around the corner.

**TROPHY #4** • (South Corridor) Where this corridor bends, look up to the rafters and grapple into the grate.

**TROPHY #5** • (Library) Enter the Library and look right. Grapple off the grate for the trophy.

**TROPHY #6** • (Library) At the top of the Library, grapple into the grate along the circular wall.

**TROPHY #7** • (Warden's Office) As you're exiting the main office, turn right into the small room.

**TROPHY #8** • (Records Room) Up and to the right of the bars is a grate. Ultra-grapple it down and follow the path.

**TROPHY #9** • (East Wing Corridor) Face the door to the Warden's office and look to your left. There's a destructible wall—up and behind it, a trophy.

**TEETH #1-3** • (Main Hall) In the foyer at the top of this room are two security rooms. Search the western one, and don't overlook the grapple-able grate.

**TEETH #4-5** • (North Corridor) Outside the jail cell with spiral text on the walls. Grab 'em while looking for Dr. Young's office.

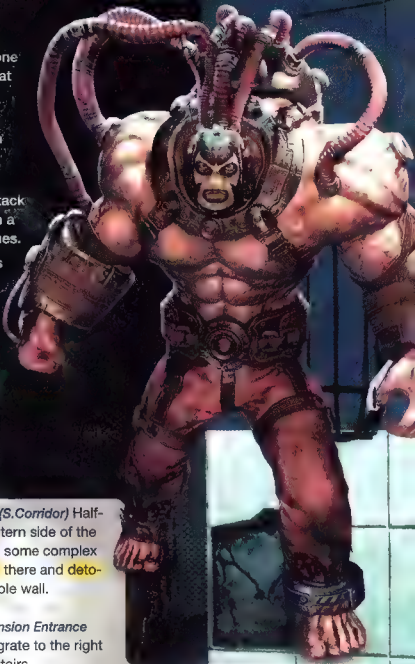
**TEETH #6-8** • (West Wing Corridor) While following Dr. Young's fingerprints, you'll run into a purple gift box with the teeth inside.

**TEETH #9-11** • (South Corridor) In the middle of the hallway, near the display cases. Obtainable while tracking Young's fingerprints.

**TEETH #12-14** • (Library) On the stairs leading to the lowest level of the library.

**TEETH #15-17** • (East Wing Corridor) They're in a gift box found while trailing the Warden's DNA.

**TEETH #18-20** • (Warden's Office) On the upper floor of Warden Sharp's office. Go to the door that leads back to the East Wing and look up. There's a hole you can grapple into. The teeth are near the back of the filing cabinets.



# Botanical Gardens

**SECRETS MAP** • In the generator room where you save a janitor, look up for an electrified gate high above the room. **Grapple** to it, then use the long-range sequencer to **hack** your way in.

**RIDDLE #1** • As you enter the Botanical Gardens, find the bench with two dead security men posed with books. Scan the whole scene.

**RIDDLE #2** • When heading to the Generator Room to save the janitor, you'll pass through a corridor with a garden bench at its center. Scan the gold plate.

**RIDDLE #3** • On the circular greenhouse's second level, behind the fountain statue's back and nestled between some tree branches, is the Mad Hatter's sea set.

**RIDDLE #4** • Crawl through the air duct tunnels between the Flooded Corridor and the Abandoned Chamber, and keep the camera pointed downward until you see a pair of gloves, a gas mask, and a book under the bars below you.

**RIDDLE #5** • After returning to the Flooded Corridor, you'll rescue a second janitor from prisoners. Before heading to the Aviary, go down the southern hallway and turn the corner. In front of you is a bench with broken toy soldiers strewn across the seat. Scan them.

**RIDDLE #6** • On your way to the Aviary, you'll pass through a small square room with a headless statue holding flowers. Scan the gold inscription plate.

**RIDDLE #7** • Stand facing the secret door on the western side of the Aviary and turn left. Look up. See the cobwebbed skeleton? Scan it.

**RIDDLE #8** • A ? puzzle. Before using the Abandoned Chamber's steel exit door, turn left and jump to the lower platform. Run along and shimmy to a waterfall. Climb up, turn around and jump again, then go right and batarang the catwalk. Halfway across, turn left and shimmy up the brickwork until you can climb up to the chamber's highest point. Head to the northern end of this platform and duck under the debris to find the question mark.

**INTERVIEW #1** • (Glasshouse Entrance) Entering the Gardens, there's a bench with a tape on the right-hand wall.

**INTERVIEW #2** • (Statue Corridor) You'll pass through this corridor heading to the Generator Room to save the janitor. Along its southern side is a bench with the tape.

**INTERVIEW #3** • (Glasshouse Generator Room) On a computer behind the janitor's chair.

**INTERVIEW #4** • (Flooded Corridor) On a bench in front of the Aviary door.

**INTERVIEW #5** • (Aviary) On a bench in the Aviary's southeast corner, behind two birdcages.

**CHRONICLE #1** • (Abandoned Chamber) In the spot you stood to scan Riddle #8, run and jump to catch the ledge. Shimmy left and climb up.

**CHRONICLE #2** • (Glasshouse Entrance) Exiting the Gardens, Ivy will block your way. Drop through the floor, turn around, and scan the symbol.

**CHRONICLE #3** • (Titan Production Facility) Remember when you used the Line Launcher for the first time, leaving the fight with Joker's deformed henchmen? You **zipped** across a gap to the exit. Left of the exit, **ultra-grapple** the destructible wall.

**TROPHY #1** • (Glasshouse Generator Room) There's an electrified gate high above the room. **Grapple** to it and use the upgraded sequencer to **hack** the door.

**TROPHY #2** • (Botanical Glasshouse) **Detonate** the destructible wall at the back of the fountain and crawl.

**TROPHY #3** • (Botanical Glasshouse) There's a T-shaped series of floor grates on the northern side of the second level of the room. Underneath is a trophy.

**TROPHY #4** • (Ventilation System) Search the branching air duct tunnels between the Flooded Corridor and the Abandoned Chamber, near some mushrooms. If you reach the exit, you've crawled past it.

**TROPHY #5** • (Abandoned Chamber) Go to the northeastern corner of the room, drop into the sewer and duck into the arched tunnel.

**TROPHY #6** • (Abandoned Chamber) Head to the northern outside edge of the structure looking for a grate at your feet. Follow the tunnel and come back out inside the structure.

**TROPHY #7** • (Abandoned Chamber) Jump to the western platform, then grab the hand holds on the wall. Shimmy across and climb up into the waterfall. Turn around and jump to the opposite platform. Head south until you see a catwalk on your left. Batarang the rope holding the catwalk and jump to the trophy.

**TROPHY #8** • (Titan Production Facility) Remember when you first used the Line Launcher to **zip** away from the Joker's two deformed henchmen? On the right side of that exit is a trophy.

**TROPHY #9** • (Flooded Corridor) You'll walk over this trophy in your search for Ivy, after **zipping** through the arched greenhouse tunnel full of flowerpots.

**TROPHY #10** • (Abandoned Chamber) Start as if grabbing trophy #7, but stop halfway along the catwalk and grab the brickwork to your left. Shimmy onto the central platform. The eastern wall is destructible. **Detonate** it and **zip** to the trophy.

**TEETH #1-3** • (Glasshouse Entrance) In the first room of the Gardens. Get them all before continuing.

**TEETH #4-6** • (Statue Corridor) You'll find these while heading to the Generator Room to save the janitor.

**TEETH #7-8** • (Flooded Corridor) On the other side of the water.

**TEETH #9-11** • (Aviary) Appear around the main henchman's body.

**TEETH #12-14** • (Flooded Corridor) You'll find these while following Ivy's trail after **zipping** across a narrow arched hallway full of flowerpots.

**TEETH #15-17** • (Glasshouse Entrance) Appear while leaving the Gardens after speaking with Ivy.

**TEETH #18-20** • (Flooded Corridor) Appear when you return to the Gardens with the antidote. Kill them before crossing the water.

## BOSS BEATDOWN #3 Scarecrow

Dr. Jonathan Crane has always been a freaky dude. But the psychotic psychedelics he sets off in this game are so wild, we don't want to spoil it for you. Watch for him.

► This isn't so much a boss fight as a boss encounter, because the whole goal is to go from point A to point B without Scarecrow seeing you. If he does? Get ready to restart, dead man.

► Move counterclockwise around the platforms, staying out of view. **Detonate** any walls that block you and use the bat signal when you reach it.

► You'll encounter Scarecrow multiple times, but the solution is always stealth. Stay sneaky.



## BOSS BEATDOWN #4 Zsasz

Victor Zsasz is a deranged serial killer who keeps a tally of his victims by carving notches into his skin. He has a lot of notches.

- Zsasz is an easy one. Don't let him spot you though—he'll execute Dr. Young if you show yourself. And you don't want that to happen.
- Simply stroll to the entrance to Warden Sharp's main room while holding R2 and press X to lock to corner cover.
- Now wait for your chance. Zsasz will eventually peek out from Young's back, rendering himself vulnerable to your attacks.
- Ready a Batarang with manual aim and throw when he looks. That's all you need to do.

## Caves

**SECRETS MAP** • In the first room you enter while shutting down the Titan valves, **ultra-grapple** down a wall, defeat the thugs, then grab the map off the stool.

**RIDDLE #1** • A ? puzzle. While running up the second collapsed column, grab the handhold on the platform above and shimmy around, climb up, and then find the ? on the brick wall in front of you.

**INTERVIEW #1** • (Old Sewer) Next to a doctor's corpse, underneath a grate hiding a trophy.

**INTERVIEW #2** • (Surface Access) When exiting the M.Sewer Junction, check the crates.

**INTERVIEW #3** • (Control Room Access) Entering the Caves to find Croc's Lair (from Intensive Treatment) you'll go through this room. Check the crate.

**INTERVIEW #4** • (Pump Control Room) On a barrel between the Pump Control Room and the Pressure Control Junction.

**PATIENT INTERVIEW #5** • (Pump Room) Entering this room, **zip** to the barbed-wired platform across from you and check the barrel.

**CHRONICLE #1** • (Old Sewer) Drop into the Old Sewer from the Batcave, turn right, and walk forward.

**CHRONICLE #2** • (Pressure Control Junction) Behind the first wall you need to **ultra-grapple** down in the elevator shaft when escaping after shutting down the Titan pumps.

**CHRONICLE #3** • (Control Room) **Ultra-grapple** a destructible wall on your right as you enter the area.

**TROPHY #1** • (Old Sewer) **Grapple** the grate high above the doctor's corpse.

**TROPHY #2** • (Old Sewer) You'll pass this hallway heading to the Main Sewer Junction from the Old Sewer. **Detonate** the wall halfway down the passage.

**TROPHY #3** • (M.Sewer Junction) Near the beginning of your climb, jump onto the first block. Make a small jump and turn left. After a longer jump, turn a corner. It's on the floor.

**TROPHY #4** • (M.Sewer Junction) After jumping off the ground-level catwalks, but before jumping to the first fallen column, grab the handholds on the wall and shimmy around the corner. Climb up and find an alcove.

**TROPHY #5** • (M.Sewer Junction) Halfway up the room, jump into the shallow stream. Before walking up the fallen column, jump across to the alcove.

**TROPHY #6** • (M.Sewer Junction) While running up the second fallen column, there's a handhold on the platform above. Grab it and shimmy right, around the corner. Climb up, climb again and there's the trophy.

**TROPHY #7** • (Croc's Lair) On the eastern end, opposite the entrance to the Lair. **Zip** to it.

**TROPHY #8** • (Croc's Lair) Before entering the Old Sewer, detective-scan the ceiling. **Ultra-grapple** the destructible panel. **Grapple** up to find a trophy.

**TROPHY #9** • (Old Sewer) You'll pass this trophy often traveling through the sewers. You can **zip** to it.

**TROPHY #10** • (Old Sewer) Drop into the Old Sewer from the Batcave. Turn left, **ultra-grapple** the destructible ceiling panel and **grapple** up.

**TROPHY #11** • (M.Sewer Junction) After traversing the first fallen column and jumping into the stream, jump the next gap into the dead-end alcove. Turn left and **zip** to the opposite alcove for the trophy.

**TROPHY #12** • (M.Sewer Junction) **Zip** up near one of the archways, opposite the door to Surface Access and Arkham North exit.

**TROPHY #13** • (M.Sewer Junction) You'll pass the trophy after your second **zip** across the chamber.

**TROPHY #14** • (Pressure Control Junction) Heading to the western Pump Room, watch the right. **Ultra-grapple** the destructible wall and **grapple** up.

**TROPHY #15** • (Control Room) Entering the area, turn left. **Ultra-grapple** the destructible wall.

**TROPHY #16** • (The Batcave) On the first island as you glide between the Batcave and Old Sewer.

**TROPHY #17** • (Batcave) Between the Batcave and Old Sewer. Glide from the second large island to the northern cliff on your map, then **zip** back.

**TEETH #1-3** • (Old Sewer) Past the Killer Croc tape, before the cavernous area with the crumbling surfaces.

**TEETH #4-5** • (M.Sewer Junction) In the square area before the first fallen column.

**TEETH #6-8** • (M.Sewer Junction) At the end of your climb, along the hallway to the metal door.

**TEETH #9-11** • (Croc's Lair) After defeating Croc, as you exit through the western door.

**TEETH #12-14** • (Pressure Control Junction) On the stairs between the Pressure Control Junction and the western Pump Room.

**TEETH #15-17** • (Pressure Control Junction) In the passageway between the Pressure Control Junction and the eastern Pump Room.

**TEETH #18-20** • (Pressure Control Junction) After shutting down the third and final pump, you'll find a gift box on the way back to Pressure Control.

# Intensive Treatment

**SECRETS MAP** • While searching for Croc's Lair, look for the monster's meat locker at the bottom of the two elevator shafts. Then take the stairs to an office and the map.

**RIDDLE #1** • Scan the painting of Warden Sharron in the Intensive Treatment Lobby.

**RIDDLE #2** • In the Utility Corridor locker room, scan the radio on the bench.

**RIDDLE #3** • Midway along the Transfer Loop corridor, you'll spot an office with an Emergency Shutdown gate blocking half the door. Crouch underneath and scan the Iceberg Lounge poster.

**RIDDLE #4** • After the game introduces the Riddler's Challenges, find the cell decorated with green question marks in the area where you first start the game.

**RIDDLE #5** • When you return for Killer Croc's Lair, enter the Cell Block Transfer on the eastern side and **hack** through the southern security gate. Up the stairs, scan the portrait of the guard with a hook for a hand and his family.

**RIDDLE #6** • After the Scarecrow has crashed the elevator, drop into Killer Croc's area. Stand on the second elevator and **grapple** the wall grate above. Crawl through the ducts to reach the Scarecrow's headquarters.

**RIDDLE #7** • In the room where you rescued a guard from Zsasz's electric chair, **ultra-grapple** or **detonate** the destructible wall.

**RIDDLE #8** • A ? puzzle. In the windowed offices in the middle of the Intensive Treatment Lobby, turn on detective mode. The top half of the question mark is on one of the windows. Look through it and aim for the circular air vent on the far wall.

**INTERVIEW #1** • (*Secure Transit*) Climb the stairs next to the elevator shaft and follow the path to a desk.

**INTERVIEW #2** • (*Intensive Treatment Lobby*) In the center of the room is a raised office. It's on a desk inside.

**INTERVIEW #3** • (*Cell Block Transfer*) Enter the Cell Block Transfer on the eastern side, **hack** the northern gate and climb the stairs.

**INTERVIEW #4** • (*Secure Transit*) Entering the elevator shafts area from the Cell Block Transfer doors, turn right and follow the stairs.

**INTERVIEW #5** • (*Decontamination*) **Hack** the office's electrified door with the sequencer.

**CHRONICLE #1** • (*Secure Transit*) Near the top when climbing the elevator shaft.

**CHRONICLE #2** • (*Secure Transit*) Halfway up and through a crawl space, there's a room with two destructible walls. **Detonate** or **ultra-grapple** the left one.

**CHRONICLE #3** • (*Transfer Loop*) In the eastern roundabout area, locate a high wall grate. **Grapple** to the opposite air duct, then **ultra-grapple** the grate down and jump across to the secret area.

**TROPHY #1** • (*Holding Cells*) After the escape, look toward the south side of the room—especially behind the wall grate.

**TROPHY #2** • (*Patient Pacification Chamber*) Inside the grate in the southwest corner of the room where you saved a guard.

**TROPHY #3** • (*Processing Corridor*) Escape the Patient Pacification Chamber through northeast wall grate. The trophy is near the end of the duct passage, before the exit grate.

**TROPHY #4** • (*Decontamination*) Near the middle and western sides of the large chamber are showers with floor grates. Go through either one.

**TROPHY #5** • (*Secure Treatment Transfer*) In the room where you fight Joker's test subject there are two control rooms. One contains a trophy.

**TROPHY #6** • (*Maintenance Access*) Look for an openable grate while crawling through the vents. The trophy will be visible. Climb above it and then drop into the passage next to it.

**TROPHY #7** • (*Utility Corridor*) In the same area as the Jack Ryder radio. **Detonate** or **ultra-grapple** the destructible wall.

**TROPHY #8** • (*Secure Transit*) While climbing the elevator shaft, there's a glowing orange wall grate. **Ultra-grapple** it, then run and grab the ledge, and pull yourself up.

**TROPHY #9** • (*Decontamination*) **Hack** the office door and climb the ladder.

**TEETH #1-3** • (*Holding Cells*) There are two offices. One has Gordon and Boles, the other teeth.

**TEETH #4** • (*Processing Corridor*) In corner of this hallway, near a guard.

**TEETH #5** • (*Processing Corridor*) This is a dead end at first. The teeth are in the middle of the hallway.

**TEETH #6-8** • (*Decontamination*) As soon as you exit the Processing Corridor and enter Decontamination, you'll find the teeth.

**TEETH #9-11** • (*Decontamination*) In the large decontamination chamber are three sets of teeth. They're scattered so you need to look around.

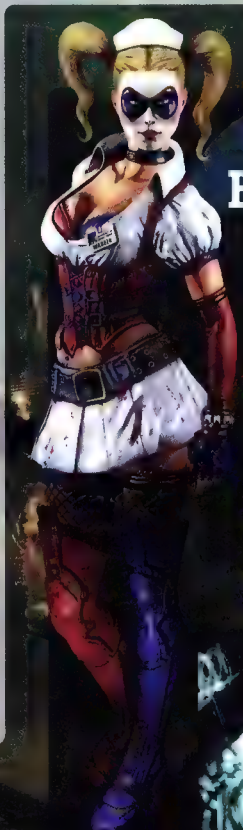
**TEETH #12** • (*Transfer Loop*) Immediately after exiting the decontamination chamber, on its southern side.

**TEETH #13** • (*Transfer Loop*) Following the green arrows after Teeth #12, you'll find this set before the door with Joker's face on it.

**TEETH #14-16** • (*Transfer Loop*) While following Gordon/Bole's trail, you'll pass a reception area. The teeth surround the central desk.

**TEETH #17** • (*Secure Transit*) At the top of the elevator shaft, you meet some thugs. The teeth are to the side.

**TEETH #18-20** • (*Intensive Treatment Lobby*) When Gordon's trail ends, you'll find the teeth.



## BOSS BEATDOWN #5 Harley Quinn

Ex-shrink Harley proved so popular after her introduction in the animated series that she was added to the comics.

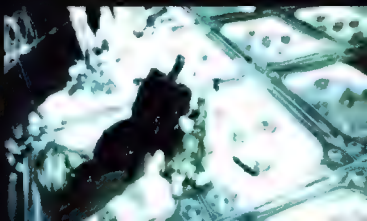
► You don't fight Harley directly—just her henchmen. Pay close attention to the arena floor...

► Harley will send an electric current through the arena. It moves in a counterclockwise pattern. Watch for it.

► Fight the goons as normal, but when the middle floor starts to zap, run to the platform on the left and climb up.

► Counter any incoming moves and return to the central platform when the coast is clear. Keep repeating the routine.

► Beware later waves of henchmen; they'll carry knives and stun rods.



## Medical Facility

**SECRETS MAP** • When you enter the area where you must save Gordon from Harley Quinn, you should be in a room with a window that overlooks everything else. The map is on the desk. Check out the bear too.

**RIDDLE #1** • On the bottom most floor of the Sanatorium, scan the ripped-open cage full of skulls and chains.

**RIDDLE #2** • In the room where you save Aaron Cash, go inside the sub-office and check out the newspaper clippings on the cabinet.

**RIDDLE #3** • Unstrap Dr. Chen from the operating chair, then **grapple** up to the balcony behind you. Scan the whiteboard on the right.

**RIDDLE #4** • After dealing with the Scarecrow in the morgue, scan a glass jar of shark parts sitting next to one of the autopsy tables.

**RIDDLE #5** • When you enter the area where you must save Gordon from Harley Quinn, you should be in a room with a window that overlooks everything else. On the desk, find a teddy bear—and grab the map top.

**RIDDLE #6** • Once Harley's not watching over the foyer anymore, return and scan the gold-plated Bruce Wayne inscription on the wall.

**RIDDLE #7** • See Harley's office in the Secure Access area? **Ultra-grapple** the high wall grate next to the elevator doors, crawl, and drop.

**RIDDLE #8** • A ? puzzle. Head to the western side of the middle level and **detonate** the floor panel. Go into detective mode and look north and downward through the resulting hole.

**INTERVIEW #1** • (Sanatorium) Go to the elevator area. Opposite the doctors is a hallway with an office. Check its desk.

**INTERVIEW #2** • (Patient Observation) In the office where Aaron Cash and the doctor were trapped.

**INTERVIEW #3** • (Medical Foyer) In the first room of the Medical Facility. Return after defeating Harley.

**INTERVIEW #4** • (Experimental Chamber) In Bane's holding cell.

**INTERVIEW #5** • (Secure Access) From the elevator area, turn left. **Hack** the electrified door next to the crumbling wall.

**CHRONICLE #1** • (Sanatorium) Enter the Sanatorium from the Medical Foyer, walk along the western side of the room until you find a destructible floor. **Detonate** it.

## BOSS BEATDOWN #7 Poison Ivy

Poison Ivy's giant plant boss isn't tricky to fight, but it's easily one of the most visually impressive characters in the game.

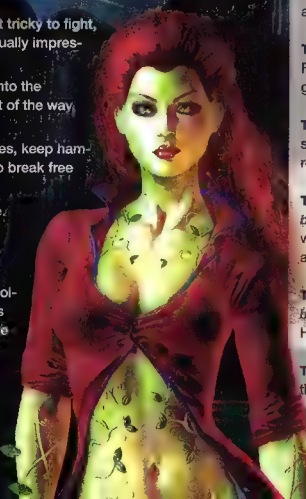
► The plant's tentacles will slam into the ground and sprout grass. Dive out of the way when this happens.

► If you are caught in her brambles, keep hammering X as quickly as you can to break free and stop taking damage.

► The Quick Batarang is key here. Run in circles to avoid the orbs and quickly stab R1 when Ivy's shield opens.

► Get ready to dive away from a volley of orbs afterwards. When she's down, spray her cell with Explosive Gel and **detonate**.

► Repeat the above method the second time too. You'll need to fight men as well, but avoid the bramble and you'll be fine.



## BOSS BEATDOWN #6 Killer Croc

Actually named Waylon Jones, Croc was born with a terrible medical condition that turned him reptilian. And also huge and psychotic.

► Do not disturb Croc—you will die. But so long as you hold R2 to crouch you can safely move as fast as you like.

► At the 59-meter mark, Croc will jump out and charge. Be cool, manually aim a Batarang and knock him out.

► On the way to the sacs, you'll need to keep knocking him down. When bubbles appear, hold X to run—some platforms will sink.

► Bridge gaps with the Line Launcher to collect the last sacs. Get ready for some serious running.

► Luckily, Batman was prepared for Croc's final charge. Equip the Explosive Gel and **detonate** when Croc steps on the giant bat.



**CHRONICLE #2** • (Medical Foyer) Go to the Sanatorium door. Turn around and **ultra-grapple** the destructible wall.

**CHRONICLE #3** • (X-Ray Room) **Grapple** to the X-Ray area roof and turn towards the exit. **Ultra-grapple** the destructible wall and jump in.

**TROPHY #1** • (Maintenance Access) Follow the same air duct that takes you out of here, but branch right halfway through.

**TROPHY #2** • (Sanatorium) **Detonate** the destructible wall on this floor and head inside.

**TROPHY #3** • (Upper Corridor) Follow the red path and look for a grate. The trophy is in the air ducts.

**TROPHY #4** • (X-Ray Room) After saving Dr. Young, **grapple** onto the roof above her.

**TROPHY #5** • (Experimental Chamber) You should find this trophy while sneaking through the ducts avoiding the guards.

**TROPHY #6** • (Experimental Chamber) On the roof of the room holding Harley and Gordon.

**TROPHY #7** • (Surgery Room) **Hack** the electrified door and walk upstairs.

**TROPHY #8** • (Sanatorium) **Ultra-grapple** the grate on the eastern wall and head inside.

**TROPHY #9** • (Patient Observation) **Ultra-grapple** the grate to your right and crawl in.

**TEETH #1-3** • (Sanatorium) Spread out on the lowest floor.

**TEETH #4-6** • (Upper Corridor) After saving Dr. Young in the X-Ray room, exit. They'll explode from a gift box.

**TEETH #7-9** • (Patient Observation) On the mid-level catwalks surrounding the middle of the room.

**TEETH #10-12** • (Upper Corridor) After saving Dr. Chen in the Surgery Room, you'll find a gift box in the hallway.

**TEETH #13-15** • (Upper Corridor) After saving Dr. Chen in the Surgery Room, you'll find a gift box.

**TEETH #16-17** • (Sanatorium) In front of the elevator to the morgue.

**TEETH #18-20** • (Lower Corridor) After escaping Scarecrow you'll follow green arrows up some stairs. The teeth are near the stairs.

# Penitentiary

**SECRETS MAP** • After dealing with Harley, walk into the control tower she formerly occupied. The map is on a desk on the ground level.

**RIDDLE #1** • In the women's rest-room to the west of the Penitentiary's reception area, scan Batman's reflection in the grimy mirror.

**RIDDLE #2** • In the Main Cell Block, **grapple** to the raised area above the cages. Take the catwalk north, scanning the machine gun and Latin on the wall.

**RIDDLE #3** • At the back of the Security Control Room is a holding cell with handprints smeared all over the glass. Scan whomever you see inside.

**RIDDLE #4** • While chasing Harley, scan the small cell covered in calendar pages.

**RIDDLE #5** • Find the cell with the big "Vote Dent" poster on the wall and scan it.

**RIDDLE #6** • You'll find a frozen prison cell in the area where you locked up Harley Quinn. Scan it.

**RIDDLE #7** • **Grapple** to the vents above the guards and **ultra-grapple** the destructible wall, then another wall across the room. Then Batarang the control box to clear the toxin, drop down and locate the locker area and the poster of Prometheus.

**RIDDLE #8** • A ? puzzle. After clearing the guardroom of toxin (see riddle #7), go across to the room with the switch box and look back in Detective Mode to where you just were.

**INTERVIEW #1** • (Cells Access) After entering through the front door, on a desk to your right.

**INTERVIEW #2** • (Main Cell Block) This office is accessible by catwalk from the raised area above the cages. To the left if you're facing the gun display case. Check the desk.

**INTERVIEW #3** • (Guardroom) Rescue the guards and follow them into the room with fogged windows. Search the desk.

**INTERVIEW #4** • (Controlled Access) Pull down the ceiling grate, **grapple** up to the office and pick up the interview tape.

**INTERVIEW #5** • (Extreme Incarceration) After beating Harley, head inside the control tower. Find the desk at the top, outside the area with the security panels.

**CHRONICLE #1** • (Extreme Incarceration) From the room where you lock up Harley, return to the main control tower and go upstairs to the numbered panels. **Hack** panel #5 and head back to cell #5. Inside is a destructible wall. **Detonate** it.

**CHRONICLE #2** • (Guardroom) Empty the room of toxin, then **detonate** the destructible patch on the southern wall.

**CHRONICLE #3** • (Main Cell Block) On the left in the short hall leading to The Green Mile is a destructible patch. **Detonate** it, then **zip** across the water.

**TROPHY #1** • (Cells Access) There's a restroom to the west of the reception area. The trophy's in the last stall of the men's side.

**TROPHY #2** • (M.Cell Block) The left hall between the Main Cell Block and The Green Mile has a destructible patch. **Detonate** it.

**TROPHY #3** • (Security Control Room) At the back of this room is a staircase. Climb it and **detonate** the destructible wall at the top.

**TROPHY #4** • (The Green Mile) In one of the cells on the western side, after the inmates are released.

**TROPHY #5** • (M.Cell Block) In a cell along the southern wall.

**TROPHY #6** • (M.Cell Block) Head into the Guardroom, go left and **grapple** the grate on the left wall. Follow the ducts until you find it.

**TROPHY #7** • (Controlled Access) Head upstairs, **detonate** the destructible walls and drop into the cell containing the trophy.

**TROPHY #8** • (Extreme Incarceration) Go upstairs in the main control tower to the numbered panels. **Hack** #5 and the door below will open. **Detonate** your way out (you'll see).

**TROPHY #9** • (Security Control Room) Go to the room where you found Warden Sharp. Climb the stairs to the two cells at the top. One contains an inmate; the other a trophy. **Hack** the door.

**TROPHY #10** • (Guardroom) Clear the room of toxin. Then **ultra-grapple** to the area that held the switch box and walk through the door.

**TEETH #1-3** • (Cells Access) In front of the door to the Main Cell Block, before leaving the Penitentiary area.

**TEETH #4-6** • (M.Cell Block) **Grapple** above the cages. Turn north and cross the catwalk to the room. Turn left to see the teeth.

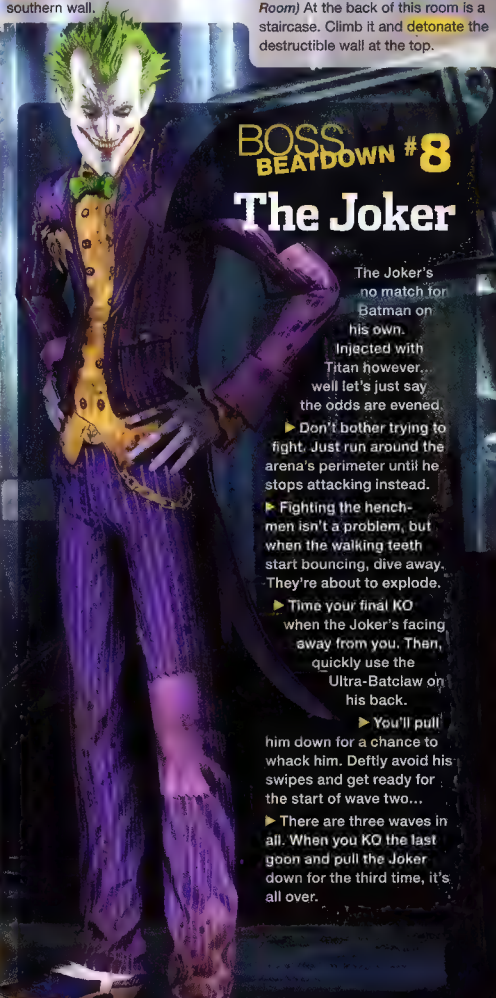
**TEETH #7-9** • (Guardroom) In front of the door to the M.Cell Block after rescuing the guards.

**TEETH #10-12** • (Main Cell Block) In your path as you chase after Harley, near Calendar Man's cell.

**TEETH #13-15** • (Main Cell Block) Also along your path as you chase Harley, near the exit of the Main Cell Block.

**TEETH #16-17** • (Extreme Incarceration) Lock away Harley, then walk through the door at the bottom of her control tower.

**TEETH #18-20** • (Controlled Access) After locking away Harley, you'll find a gift box in Controlled Access. ■



The Joker's no match for Batman on his own.

Injected with Titan however... well let's just say the odds are evened.

► Don't bother trying to fight. Just run around the arena's perimeter until he stops attacking instead.

► Fighting the henchmen isn't a problem, but when the walking teeth start bouncing, dive away. They're about to explode.

► Time your final KO when the Joker's facing away from you. Then, quickly use the Ultra-Batclaw on his back.

► You'll pull him down for a chance to whack him. Deftly avoid his swipes and get ready for the start of wave two...

► There are three waves in all. When you KO the last goon and pull the Joker down for the third time, it's all over.



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# Reviews

Scores | Analysis | Buying Advice

## RATINGS



★★★★★ **LEGENDARY**

A game so amazing, the entire PTOM staff recommends it. A must buy!

★★★★★ **SUPERB**

Not quite a timeless classic, but one of the finest of its breed.

★★★★★ **GREAT**

A finely crafted, thoroughly enjoyable experience. Worth your time and money.

★★★★ **SOLID**

A strong game. We noticed some flaws, but there's more to like than loathe.

★★★ **ENJOYABLE**

If the topic/license/style is your thing, there's enough to keep you entertained.



★★★ **MEDIOCRE**

An equal blend of sweet and sour. Discerning gamers can find better.

★★ **SCARRED**

A smattering of entertainment hidden among an abundance of flaws.

★ **FRUSTRATING**

"Argh!" will be the self-created soundtrack of this game. No thank you.

★ **PAINFUL**

We played it so you don't have to. Now you owe us cookies.

★ **BROKEN**

Hey, it comes in a free plastic box! Weel!



## Hot 5 List Top Picks from Recent Issues



1) **WWE SVR 2010** p. 70

2) **Uncharted 2** | PS3 | Nov 09

3) **Batman: Arkham Asylum** | PS3 | Oct 09

4) **Prototype** | PS3 | Sept 09

5) **Fight Night Round 4** | PS3 | Aug 09

★★★★★

★★★★★

★★★★★

★★★★★

★★★★★

## Meet the experts delivering your buying advice

This month, we reveal our secret wrestling alter egos. WWE superstar-dom, here we come.



**ERIC BRATCHER**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**ROGER BURCHILL**  
MANAGING EDITOR

**KEN BOUSQUET**  
ART DIRECTOR

As a headbanging lover of monster movies, Eric would become Godzilla. His entrance music? The classic Godzilla theme, rerecorded by Mastodon and Spinal Tap. His costume? Crazy hair, black-and-white face paint, a battle axe-shaped guitar like Gene Simmons' bass, and the ability to breathe fire. Wait...that is Gene Simmons' old schtick. Man, he stinks at this...

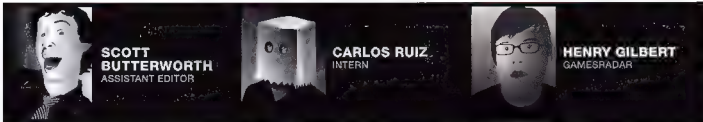
**NOW PLAYING:** *Street Fighter IV*, *Fallout 3*, *Fat Princess*

For Roger, there is no division between his ego and his id—he is The Love Doctor. Armed with the witty repartee and disarming double entendres, his warm, engaging personal demeanor relaxes opponents...until it's too late. Once constricted by his signature move, the Creepy Cuddler, there's naught to do but listen to the sweet strains of the Carpenter's "Close to You."

**NOW PLAYING:** *Gran Turismo PSP*, *Disney Sing It: Pop Hits*, *LittleBigPlanet*

Ken's wrestling alter ego has been loathed in place ever since he walked into his fourth grade class wearing a pair of boots that went up over his calf. They sported a two-inch-coat of white goat fur. A foot-and-a-half of snow was on the ground and they were terribly practical, but when he stepped into class he became a 10-year-old sasquatch, a fearsome abominable snowman...the one and only Big Bear Boo-sker-ay!

**NOW PLAYING:** *FIFA Soccer 10*, any questions?



**SCOTT BUTTERWORTH**  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

**CARLOS RUIZ**  
INTERN

**HENRY GILBERT**  
GAMESRADOR

As the lights dramatically fade to black and Edwin Starr's "War" blasts from the arena's PA, Scott would triumphantly emerge as... The Negotiator! Delivering diplomatic and carefully-worded smackdown, he'd unleash his signature move: The Olive Branch of... Peace! He'd eventually set the record for the most ties ever achieved by a pro wrestler... assuming his opponents are ok with that.

**NOW PLAYING:** *Batman: Arkham Asylum*, *Borderlands*, *Brutal Legend*

Carlos the Intern confesses to a limited wrestling IQ, but since he's a fan of Nacho Libre and Tekken's King, he's opting for "El Oso Espantoso" (the scary bear). Adorned in bear mask, brown pants, black kneepads and boots, his signature move would be the Rocky Mountain Suplex. His theme song? "Right Now" by Korn synched to video of him grappling with the bear from *The Edge*.

**NOW PLAYING:** *Batman: Arkham Asylum*, *Wolfenstein*, *Resistance 2*

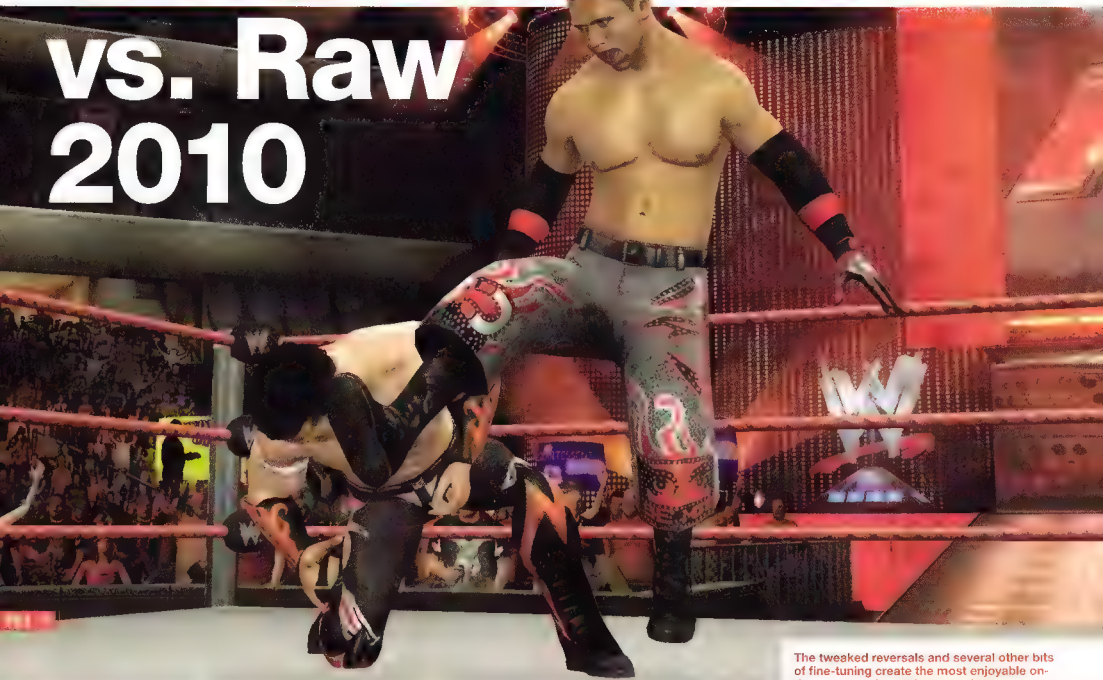
Henry's alter ego would trade on his Floridian heritage. Whether eating oranges for breakfast or fighting alligators in the Okefenokee or visiting a theme park, the Funky Floridian would lay fool down with his awesome finisher, the Sunshine Stare, which would obviously be an inverted Chicken Wing Suplex into a Power Bomb. His intro music would be "Firebird" by Jacksonville, Florida natives Lynyrd Skynyrd.

**NOW PLAYING:** *Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2*, *The Beatles: Rock Band*, *Fat Princess*

Win Jack from Eric's desk? We'll select one winner from emails that correctly identify the review photos from our Rating guide and explain how they're related. Send your answers with the subject line "December Ratings" to PTOM.Letters@PcMag.com



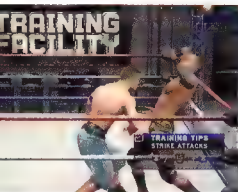
# WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010



The tweaked reversals and several other bits of fine-tuning create the most enjoyable on-the-mat experience the series has yet seen.



Not every hat in the game is practical, but who cares? The ladies love a man with worldly taste.



## Building a community, one piledriver at a time

**PS3** PRICE: \$59.99 ESRB: Teen PUBLISHER: THQ DEVELOPER: Yuke's Yokohama

**D**espite being based on a "fake" sport, the *WWE SmackDown* series and its annual releases is pretty comparable to the *Madden* football titles. A new one comes out each year, boasting incremental gameplay changes and the necessary roster updates, and gets accused of being too similar to last year's version. But this year's wrasslin' classic, *WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010*, adds so much that we wonder how the developers did it all in just 12 months.

The basic in-ring fighting has changed significantly. The HUD at the top of the screen is gone, replaced by a health-bar semicircle

around the character's feet, where the prompts for attacks also appear. The flow from signature moves to finishers is much better, and now that reversals are attached to just R2 (instead of L2 and R2) the matches are more competitive.

The character models show damage more accurately too, with blood from bleeding opponents showing up on the attacker's hand, and backs and chests reddening from damage. Overall, the in-ring product looks and feels much more like what you see on TV while still keeping the signature gameplay that fans are used to.

New players and veterans with ring rust get a much improved tutorial,

which is now both easy to find and easy to skip for the experienced grappler. Adjustable stats and settings make it simple to jump in, even if you haven't played the series in months. Speaking of jumping in, *SVR 2010* is faster than ever in that department, thanks to the game's required install.

Older game modes have been greatly improved, like the campaign mode "Road to Wrestlemania", which features some really interesting new stories. And the once boring and tedious Royal Rumble mode has at last been made fun with many more elimination choices, making it look nearly as spontaneous as it does on TV. Add new match types like Championship Scramble to the roster of returning classics and it's clear that single and multiplayer modes have both taken a real step forward.



Did we mention the graphics? No. Well, we should have, as this shot clearly demonstrates.

Also returning are the create-a-whatever tools, including the big prize: the incredibly engrossing Story Designer. For years fans have wanted to create their own storylines. Now you can make up to 10-years' worth of weekly battles, not only putting together the actual matches, but also the chest-puffing, soap opera-like drama scenes in-between matches. You can alter expressions, move the camera around, put in preprogrammed events or plug in a USB keyboard to quickly add dialogue. You can even include your created wrestler.

Speaking of created wrestlers, not only are there more props and clothing choices, but the new paint tool allows the more artistic player to make logos to place on their characters, be it a tattoo or the emblem of some of your favorite copyright-protected intellectual properties. Given the staggering depth of the Create-A-Wrestler and Story Designer, the possibilities for user-crafted content seems limitless.

Be warned though, that it can be daunting at first. We'd estimate it would take a few hours just to craft a wrestler (complete with customizable

finishing moves) and create even a beginner-level story, let alone the kind of epics we'd like to see.

In fact, that's the biggest problem with the game. It has so many new features that even series fans will have much to learn, and it's possible new players will feel lost anywhere outside the ring. The how-to guides in the creator sections are okay, but the demands it places on the player's time and knowledge will still scare some people away.

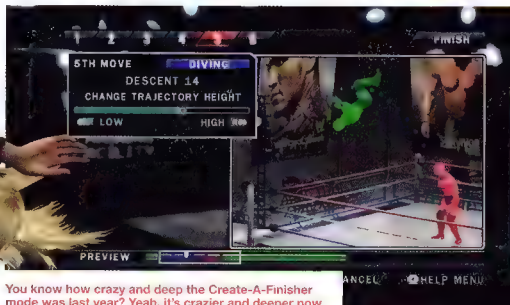
Fortunately there's an easy fix for that, and it's the biggest improvement of all in *SVR 2010*. Are you one of those who find the character creator too dense, the paint tool too touchy, or Story Designer too involved? No problem. Just go online and start downloading. This year's *SVR* is all about sharing *everything* between players.

You can upload any story, wrestler, finisher, picture, or highlight reel to the system and let other people download them. Alternatively, you can search the most recent or top player-rated uploads and grab 'em for yourself. At press time, the community was only open to testers and internal developers, but we've

## Stories we want recreated

- Stone Cold vs. Vince 1998
- The Seven Samurai
- Survivor series - 1997
- Friends - Series Finale
- Amazing Spider-Man #300

- The Grapes of Wrath
- WWE WrestleMania V:
- The Mega-Powers Exploded
- A very special Blossom
- No Country For Old Men



You know how crazy and deep the Create-A-Finisher mode was last year? Yeah, it's crazier and deeper now.



already seen things that amazed us—for example, there was a perfect Cobra Commander and a surprisingly complete recreation of the John Cusack film *High Fidelity*.

But that was just the start. Now that the general public has the power? Well, it's far too soon to say just how much will appear in this turnbuckle and spandex version of *LittleBigPlanet*. But if the players' past enthusiasm for created wrestlers is any indication, you'd better start clearing hard drive space for a tsunami of user-generated goodness. It's clear that the user-creation tools, mixed with the improved base game, will make this the *SVR* that lasts you into next year. We're just wondering what the dev team can possibly add in 2011.

Henry Gilbert



The story designer enables you to craft your own epic wrestling storylines...or to recreate *Steel Magnolias* with an all men-in-spandex cast.

"You can make up to 10-years' worth of weekly battles, including the chest-puffing, soap opera-like drama scenes in-between matches."



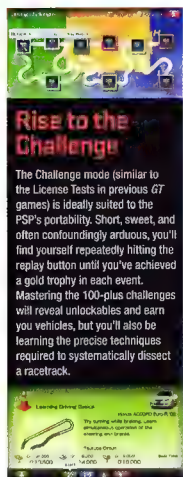
*Gran Turismo* races span real-world tracks, off-road rallies, and city circuits like this one, which takes you through New York's Times Square.

# Gran Turismo

PSP | R

Where does an 800-car gorilla fit? In the palm of your hands

**PSP** PRICE: \$39.99 ESRB: Everyone PUBLISHER: SCEA DEVELOPER: Polyphony Digital



If you're ever fortunate enough to enter a Porsche dealership to buy a 911 Carrera, don't test-drive a turbocharged 911 GT2 for kicks. The standard 911 is a brilliant performance car possessing capabilities far beyond most people's driving skills, but if you drive the insanely over-powered GT2, you will find it wanting. It's a reaction similar to our initial impression of the first portable *Gran Turismo* game.

Each *Gran Turismo* installment has perennially pushed the capabilities of the PlayStation console it's appeared upon. It's the game you pop in when you want to show off just what your system is capable of doing. And so it is with this PSP version. A true PS3 *Gran Turismo* may be right around the corner, but don't overlook the PSP game's impressive level of achieve-

ment. There is simply no PSP driving game that looks or plays better than *Gran Turismo*.

## Eyes on the Road

The first thing you notice upon hitting the handheld *Gran Turismo*'s tracks is how easily it fulfills expectations. Yup, looks great, plays great, has a billion cars (800+)—it's a *Gran Turismo* game. But this version's superior resolution and silky smooth 60fps frame-rate doesn't just set a standard for PSP graphics, it outperforms every installment of the franchise through *Gran Turismo 4*. In terms of gameplay, it means that you'll always be able to precisely anticipate and navigate a track because details in the horizon or aren't blurred or obscured by the development challenges of the PSP's

small screen. The result? You can be sure crashes in this *Gran Turismo* stem from driver error, not the developer's technical execution.

But while *Gran Turismo* is the best-looking PSP driving game to date, it isn't visually perfect. Our review build exhibited pixel artifacts and visible seams on the edges of some textures, and there does seem to be some compromise on the anti-aliasing front, as there are visible jaggies. We're hoping that the artifacts will be cleaned up for the final retail version, but don't expect significant fixes on the anti-aliasing issue. If you're the type who sees the gas tank as half-empty rather than half-full, it's a concern, but the more we played, the less we noticed the graphical niggles and the more we focused on the smooth, seamless gameplay.

## Four on the Floor

However, the fact that there are only three other cars lined-up against you is one gameplay element that doesn't fade from notice. Developer Polyphony made the call to go with a reduced field of competitors to ensure that the technical performance met the expectations of fans nurtured on the franchise's home console versions. We get it, but the dearth of on-track competition is a compromise—and the single most questionable element you have to come to terms with in *Gran Turismo* PSP. It's less of an issue when playing ad hoc against three other real-life players, but in single-player it often equates to a three-way race as the first AI opponent encountered is almost always quickly and easily left in the dust.

There may also be quibbles regarding the PSP game's control sensitivity. Since the series' focus leans towards simulation over arcade-style play, there's always been a learning curve for newcomers to become acclimated to the control system. But compared to the controllers of home consoles, the PSP's analog stick seems to impart an added layer of imprecision and over-sensitivity to steering inputs. Even franchise-veterans will find themselves frequently correcting and over-correcting their racing lines. You'll learn to adapt to the control sensitivity the more you play, but a discernible difference in control nuance remains.

The racing-line assist indicator is essential until you're intimately familiar with the layout of each track.

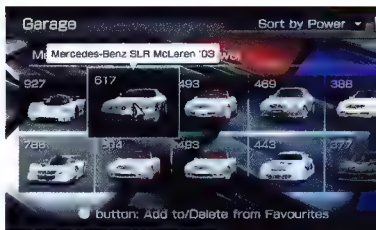


## The Checkered Flag

Still, like the Porsche 911 we cranked up at the beginning of this review, it takes a while before you realize that its only real competition is another Porsche. And so it is with the PSP version of *Gran Turismo*—every niggling complaint about the game is really in comparison to past and future PS2 and PS3 franchise

entries. If you restrict the field to every other driving game available on PSP, there is no competition—*Gran Turismo* is the driving sim of choice for the true racing aficionado on the go. If you own a PSP and you're a fan of the *Gran Turismo* series, no doubt—you're going to be putting a lot of miles on this baby.

Roger Burchill



▲ There are more than 800 cars in the game, so it's like *Pokémon* for gear-heads: You gotta catch 'em all... with your race earnings.

◀ With only three rivals on the track, you won't often see more than a couple competitors in front of you.

"As long as I've known, in every era, even from when I was a very small child, the Corvette has always been one of the coolest cars around."

—Kazunori Yamauchi

Only On PlayStation.

**GRAN TURISMO**  
Entertainment Pack

Exclusive White Chevrolet Corvette ZR1

**Limited Run**

All revved up, but got no PSP to go? A \$199.99 *Gran Turismo* Entertainment Pack hits the streets on Oct. 20th. It comes equipped with a Mystic Silver PSP-3000, *Gran Turismo* UMD, 2GB Memory Stick PRO Duo, and PSN download vouchers for 10 songs, a TBA movie, and a special white version of the Corvette ZR1 (a color otherwise unavailable in the game.)

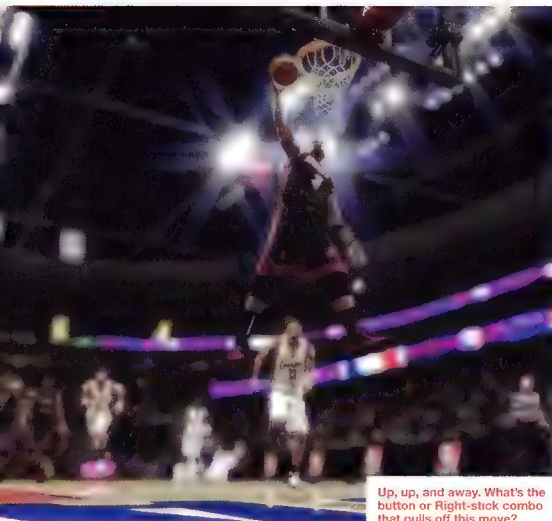
**Cover-worthy Corvette**

*Gran Turismo*-franchise creator and President of Polyphony Digital, Kazunori Yamauchi, chose the 2000 Chevrolet Corvette ZR1 for the cover of *Gran Turismo* PSP as a salute to American cars and the vision of the future they symbolize.

**PERFORMANCE**  
ZERO-TO-60 MPH:  
3.4 seconds  
STANDING 1/4-MILE:  
11.3 seconds @ 131 mph  
TOP SPEED: 205 mph

**FOR THE RECORD**  
At 12.7 miles with 73 curves, Germany's Nurburgring is the auto enthusiasts' benchmark for performance. There's constant debate over what constitutes a stock production car and their resultant lap times, but the Corvette ZR1's 7:26.4 run ranks easily in the Top 10 of all-time.

**SPECS**  
ENGINE: 6.2L Supercharged V8 (LS9)  
HORSEPOWER: 638 bhp @ 6500 rpm  
TORQUE: 604 lb-ft @ 3900 rpm  
TRANSMISSION: 6-speed Manual



Up, up, and away. What's the button or Right-stick combo that pulls off this move?

# NBA 2K10

What the NBA looks and sounds like Today

**PS3 PRICE: \$59.99 ESRB: Everyone PUBLISHER: 2K Sports DEVELOPER: Visual Concepts**

PS3 | R

It's been the goal for as long as sports gamers can remember: make the game experience look and feel like the real thing. When a passerby thought we were watching a game on TV instead of playing *NBA 2K10* for this review as we were supposed to be, it was clear that the player likenesses (now with facial animations) and arenas ringed by cheering, jeering fans look just right. However, the graphics aren't the real star. That's the NBA Today feature, the most significant step in some time toward having the game recreate and realistically represent the actual events during the coming NBA season.

If it works. To be clear, we can tell you what NBA Today is designed to do, but until the season gets underway, the true integration can't be fully tested. Every day the database will be updated with the stats and facts from the actual NBA games. You then download that data into your

game and either recreate matchups or hear dynamic commentary referencing streaks or particular real-world stats.

Assuming it all works as advertised, you'll be plugged into the NBA deeper than ever before, which come the Christmas Day LeBron vs. Kobe showdown and beyond that, the play-offs, should add that extra real-world spice to your own season progression.

Maybe you'll be powering through your own personal career as you take a young buck into the Summer League in the hopes of getting invited to training camp. It's a little trickier to make quick progress than in the equivalent mode in *NHL 2K10*, but that means spending more time on the practice court. If you're new to the *NBA 2K*-style, figuring out the timing of using the Right analog stick in varied shot moves takes time. Solid advice between games ensures you don't waste skill points on areas of your game not vital to your chosen style



As the signature guy, Kobe needs to look just right. Are we right?



Get accustomed to the controls to initiate and feel the full effect of dunks.

(all-around, three-point specialist, etc.) Veterans will make the grade a bit faster, but with no less sense of accomplishment.

Creating new players with your buddies and forming online crews to play five-on-five matches against other crews is cool, especially with the dazzling spectacle created by the bright lights of the NBA arenas and the pulsating sounds of a pretty awesome soundtrack (assuming Kanye's recent awards show jackassery hasn't put you off his music). When you work that fast break with perfect timing, culminating in a power dunk pay-off, it really is exhilarating. Your turnovers and botched plays can make the Lakers look like the Clippers, but that's why time invested on practice and drills is time well spent. Let's face it, you don't want to embarrass yourself when the TV cameras are on and the commentators can call you out. It's getting *that* real. Rob Smith

★★★★☆

## NBA 2K10

STRENGTH CHART

Graphics

Soundtrack

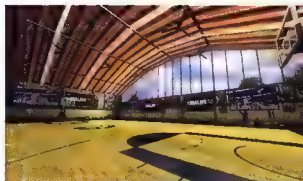
Animation

On-court moves

Online



Be careful using the reach-in to try a steal, you'll give away unnecessary fouls



Have a casual shootaround between all matches alternating between all the game's biggest stars.



Aw, c'mon Tony...that's some soft D right there. You're not gonna get the championship back playin' like that.

# NBA Live 10

A franchise that's close, but still rebuilding

PS3 PRICE: \$59.99 ESRB: Everyone PUBLISHER: EA Sports DEVELOPER: EA Canada

It's not like EA Sports' properties to be playing catch-up to the competition. When it happened to FIFA during a PES

renaissance, that team kicked it into gear in hugely impressive style. Now the *Live* team is behind 2K Sports and making in-roads with some surprisingly familiar features within its generally more accessible gameplay style. Like 2K's NBA Today real-world data updates, *Live* has Dynamic DNA (that needs to be unlocked using a code from the game box or purchased from the PS Store). Real-world scores and events can be downloaded into your *Live* season for you to merge the results with your own season, or rewind games to let you play for yourself and let the outcome arrive where your talents lead.

That talent isn't terribly hard to come by courtesy of a fairly simple control mechanism that makes it easy to perform spins, dunks, and dunks (with the right contextual timing). It makes *NBA Live* accessible to a wide range of ballers, but still extremely challenging on the highest

difficulty levels where you need to be quick with every move and utilize every skill in your arsenal. It's this kind of broad appeal that will likely make the adidas *Live Run* online "brotherhood" squads more popular than 2K's competing crews. Set your team name, invite in your friends, and then take on other squads online. Managing your team appears simple enough with tools for the team manager to communicate with the other players and easily set up a game time.

On the court itself, the players look good (a little shinier, a little less fluidly animated than 2K).



Stadiums are generally packed, particularly come play-off time, and touches unique to certain teams and arenas are accurately recreated. Now you can set up a play-off tournament, rather than go through the season mode to get to the games where it really counts. The play mechanics are certainly fine-tuned over last year, with pick-and-rolls looking and playing fluidly, and also allowing defenses to counter. It also seems some of the NBA's biggest superstars are more fully, realistically recreated, with their tendencies modeled in specific locations and situations on the court. Or maybe it's just always more fun to take control of LeBron, cover star Dwight Howard, and Kobe in clutch situations. Little animation touches (like Gasol jogging down court rubbing his elbow after managing to get an arm in the way of a Dwight Howard dunk attempt) add real-world flavor. As you learn the playbooks of each team, and apply their strengths, even the Warriors should have a shot at the play-offs (not that I made it first season out...) Still, like Golden State's seemingly perpetual rebuilding efforts, *Live 10* has taken a few solid steps forward, and is certainly a pick-up-and-play option for NBA fans.

Rob Smith

★★★★

## NBA Live 10

Getting started

Navigation

Game modes

STRENGTH CHART

Make sure you get the players' ink right... imagine what Melo would say if you messed that up.

KONAMI

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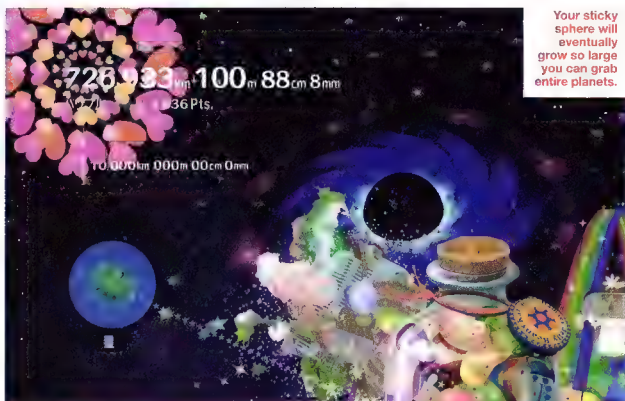
Blood and Gore  
Drug Reference  
Intense Violence  
Strong Language

SILENT HILL  
SHATTERED MEMORIES



Blood  
Drug Reference  
Language  
Sexual Themes  
Violence

Reviews | Scores | Analysis | Buying Advice



Your sticky sphere will eventually grow so large you can grab entire planets.

## Katamari Forever

Same as it ever was, and we still can't stop rolling

**PSP** PRICE: \$49.99 ESRB: Everyone PUBLISHER: Namco Bandal DEVELOPER: Namco Bandal

**H**ow is it that we're not yet tired of the *Katamari* series? It's always the same. You have a ball. Things stick to it, making it bigger. You roll the ball until it reaches a certain size or your time is up. Repeat. And it never changes.

*Katamari Forever* is no exception. Are we rolling two balls now? No. Are we setting our ball on fire to melt an ice-blocked passage? Not quite. Picking up inflatable rafts so our ball can float across water? Nope. It's still the same, dead simple premise, with one tiny addition: you can jump...but you almost never need to. Half of the levels are even recycled from previous *Katamari* games. How can we possibly be hooked by this again?

The answer, of course, is because it's still ridiculously fun. The gameplay may be easy to explain, but it's nearly impossible to put down. Plus, the series' quirky, cheerful personality is on full display. The blocky art and Grammy-worthy music will start a party in your eyes and ears. And if that somehow doesn't hook you, there's your nutjob dad, the King of

All Cosmos, whose legendarily random antics will keep you bowling forward just to see what insane thing he says and does next.

This time around he has amnesia, the apparent solution to which was to build a Robo-King that subsequently went berserk and wrecked all the galaxy's stars. So, the recycled levels find you reassembling your father's memories, and the new levels are you rolling up new replacement stars. Logical, right?

There's an offline co-op mode but the camera's lousy. No, the real draw here, inexplicable though it may be, is the same old earnest, colorful, irreverent ball rolling for one. And somehow it's just as captivating today as it ever has been.

Eric Bratcher

★★★★



The graphics are still chunky, but the crisp edges and retina-soaring colors look better than ever.

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PlayStation® The Official Magazine

Whether she's leaping through the air, sliding head-first down a ladder, or sliding along on her knees, Rubi is a superhuman bullet-spewing machine.



## WET

You can't start a fire with damp matches

**PS3 PRICE: \$59.99 ESRB: Mature PUBLISHER: Bethesda DEVELOPER: Artificial Mind and Movement (AM2M)**

When it works, *WET* can't miss. Bombalicious heroine Rubi Malone has more acrobatic moves than Lara Croft at stripper school, from wall-running to pole-spinning. And during every stunt, time slows to a crawl so you can blast holes in enemy goons (even targeting two different foes if you have twin pistols) or gut them with your sword. Blood flows, fantastic psychobilly music blares, things get all grainy like a Quentin Tarantino movie—it's a perfect formula.

But it doesn't always work. Too often, your gory bullet ballet falters because you're unable to clamber around the level as fluidly as you should, thinking that it really seems like you played this bit already, and even wondering aloud how a final boxed game

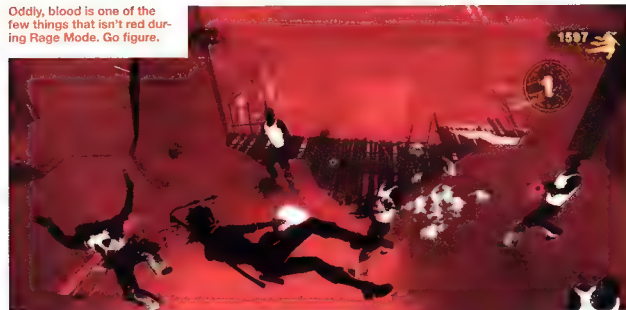
can have this many graphical glitches. Most are minor, but we actually fell out of the level in one spot. Whoops.

Then there's Rubi, who looks like a beauty queen but swaggers and swears like a drunken, belligerent Courtney Love. We quickly started wishing she would just shut up.

Rubi also has rage issues, though we actually really like those. When her bloodlust takes over, the whole screen goes all red and black-and-white, signaling that you need to slaughter heaps of enemies even more urgently than before. We also love the moments when the game deviates from its "toss wagon-loads of identical meatbags in front of Rubi" formula. The car chases, in which Rubi leaps from vehicles hood to hood, are great fun. And a short skydiving segment is the highlight of the game's brief, four-hour running time. With double the variety and polish (and maybe a manners class or two), you'd bring Rubi home to mom. As it is, she's the girl you'll party with for now, but whom you won't call next week. **Eric Bratcher**

★★★

Oddly, blood is one of the few things that isn't red during Rage Mode. Go figure.



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FEST

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SHATTERED MEMORIES

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M  
CONTENT RATED BY  
ESRB

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Intense Violence  
Strong Language

SILENT HILL  
SHATTERED MEMORIES

MATURE 17+  
M  
CONTENT RATED BY  
ESRB

Blood  
Drug Reference  
Language  
Sexual Themes  
Violence

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# Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2

A house divided against itself cannot stand...but it can punch like hell

**PS3** PRICE: \$59.99 ESRB: Teen PUBLISHER: Activision DEVELOPER: Vicarious Visions

**V**ery few comic games embrace a whole universe of superheroes as well as 2006's *Marvel Ultimate Alliance*, a team-based Action RPG that included heaps of heroes. Now *Ultimate Alliance 2* is here with some new tricks—which is crucial, because the standard gameplay is wearing a bit thin.

Technically the fourth game in a series that started with *X-Men: Legends* on the PS2, *MUA2* keeps the series' basic premise. You guide four super-beings through a level, super-thumping hordes of enemies and eventually the super-boss of the stage, then repeating the formula until the super-end credits roll.

▼ Team-up attacks enable Storm and the Human Torch to slap an enemy in the face with a tornado of fire.

► The character models are greatly enhanced, as fan-favorite Phoenix demonstrates.

This isn't bad; the gameplay's as addictive as it's ever been, and with four-player co-op, it's even improved.

You've got a number of new dual attacks that two characters jointly execute—essentially any two characters have one—to clear out a room, making co-op play even more important. And this sequel looks vastly better than its PS3 launch game predecessor, with more extensive destruction and better detailed characters. Plus, it has a meatier plot than past iterations, based around the tumultuous and topical Civil War storyline that rocked the Marvel comic universe a few years ago. Continuity buffs should be warned, however, that the game takes some liberties with the storyline for better or (in the case of the too predictable ending) worse.

Despite these additions, we just couldn't shake the feeling that we've played this before. In fact,

◀ Someone's about to wish he had a whole bucketful of Excedrin. But he's still better off than the poor schmuck the Thing is abusing.



the first *Ultimate Alliance* actually managed its roster better. *MUA2* has roughly the same number of playable characters as the original, but some of the best—Thor and Hulk especially—are a total pain to unlock. Others, like She-Hulk and Black Panther, appear only in unplayable form, and feel like a preview for DLC you may need to pay extra for later.

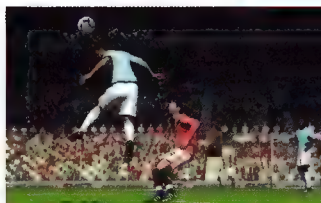
That's not the worst short-coming ever though, and *MUA2* remains a solid game; it just lacks a certain freshness. Sure it has some new ideas, better looks, a real story and some genuine respect for the material, but sometimes a hero needs more than a costume change and a plot twist to be truly rejuvenated. While still good, the series is going to need a bit more reinvention if it wants to keep pace in the post-Batman: Arkham Asylum super-hero world.

Henry Gilbert

★★★★



FIFA 10 does a better job of calculating what would actually happen when a nimble lightweight tangles with a beefy bruiser on the pitch.



The ball rebounds more realistically now, which actually makes its bounces less predictable.



It's hard to imagine improving greatly upon last year's FIFA, but the developers have certainly tried.

# FIFA 10

Can the best soccer game ever get better?

PS3 PRICE: \$55.99 ESRB: Everyone PUBLISHER: EA Sports DEVELOPER: EA Canada

**W**e've been playing FIFA for 14 years, but last year's *FIFA 09* was the one that hooked us the hardest. It just played so damn well. There were more than enough features to last a full year. Ultimate Team threw in a fun fantasy wrinkle. Full 10-on-10 games convinced us we had to improve so many areas (getting cut mid-match for not living up to expectations? That hurt, but it also inspired us). Can it really get better?

Maybe. What's fascinating is that the *FIFA 10* gameplay genuinely feels different, but it's really hard to assess whether or not it's actually better. At the heart of the change is weight, blended with chaos. Players have bulk; not extra physical size, but presence. Battling midfielders rub shoulders, and depending on their relative positions, movement direction, and size, one will be left in control of the ball, the other flailing. And you feel similar effects in every area of the field. The speedy striker must now get a step ahead or the lumbering center-half might just muscle him

off the ball. Midfield lightweights will need to pass and move.

At times, no doubt, it creates incredible moments; other times, we miss *09*'s more predictable mechanics and physics. Even in possession of the ball, particularly when surrounded by bodies, passes can carom off a leg or butt with more variety. Which seems like an improvement until your defenseman kicks the ball out of danger only to have it bounce back into the path of a striker with a clear shot at goal. Those are the moments when we curse (but slyly appreciate) the new physics. And when you're the one scoring the goals, they almost always look sweet.

Direct free kicks just outside the penalty area have become great goal scoring opportunities in real-world soccer. Few could tweak the klunky *FIFA* system to have the same potential, until this year. Plus, you can design your own plays, step-overs, dummy runs, and more on the training ground, then save them out to call up during your season run, which adds yet more dynamic realism.

If you design a set play and save it, your attack out of a free kick might prove more effective.



PS3 | R



Tucks and tweaks refine the remainder of the *FIFA* experience, from the deep-seated online options to finessed franchise management. Online, you'll still be annoyed by an offside implementation that fans should demand be further tuned, but you'll likely appreciate the long balls to the corners that can beat the offside trap.

Really, it's tough to top the gameplay, but managing lower-level teams is still rewarding and getting online with your own team is just plain cool. Fundamentally, soccer fans can rejoice, but more impressively, even casual sports fans will appreciate a perfectly conceived, wonderfully executed sports sim.

Rob Smith

★★★★☆



The good news is that you've summoned a partner. The bad news is that it's the glowy blue chick, not the monster with three eyes, teeth so large they cast shadows, and an axe that could cleave a parking garage.

# Demon's Souls

Harder than hardcore. Are you up to the challenge?

**PS3** PRICE: \$59.99 ESRB: Mature PUBLISHER: Atlus DEVELOPER: From Software

**E**ight hours and 24 minutes. That's how long it took us to successfully cleave our way through scores of undead warriors to the end of the very first level in *Demon's Souls*. Everything found within this sadistic Action RPG's five beautifully bleak and visually distinct areas is meticulously designed to kill you with the greatest possible efficiency. This is both one of *Demon's Souls*' most glorious elements and one of its crippling faults. This game isn't meant to be beaten. It's meant to utterly destroy you.

Yet, hiding beneath this unflinchingly heartless, murderous shell is a dark, pulsing world of danger that simply begs to be explored and conquered. Combat is very satisfying and moves far beyond rote hacking and slashing. Because the weapons and spells at your disposal alone won't keep you from dying incessantly, a deeper level of strategy comes into play with each new foe you encounter. *Demon's Souls*' painfully extreme difficulty forces you to learn and adapt constantly, regardless of which

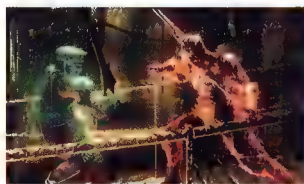
class you choose.

Speaking of dying, in most games, your epic quest ends when you're brutally slain by a huge beast. Not here. *Demon's Souls* embraces death. When your body is killed, you restart the level as a more fragile, but still combat-ready spirit, whose new number one priority is to fight back to where you died and reclaim your body.

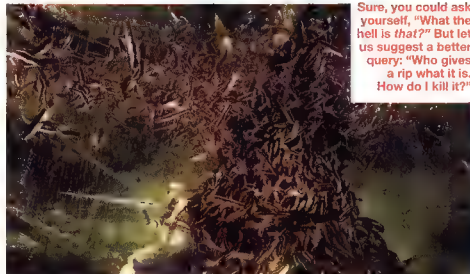
These spirit forms also enable some intriguing multi-player elements. Every real-world player exists within the same in-game world, so you're never truly alone. You'll see the translucent blue forms of other players in the dungeons, battling through the level at the same time as you. Glowing messages can be left to warn other players of traps, suggest strategies, or trick them if you're feeling evil. Bloodstains littering the realm mark the spots where others have died, and touching these stains triggers a phantom-replay demonstration of how they met their grisly end. =.

These apparitions can even materialize into full-fledged cameos. You can actually recruit

► *Demon's Souls* has no interest in giving you a fair fight. Get ready to die painfully and repeatedly.



Sure, you could ask yourself, "What the hell is that?" But let us suggest a better query: "Who gives a rip what it is. How do I kill it?"



other players into your game to team up with you. In fact, it's critical. Be warned though: other human players can also invade your game as shadow warriors and seek to slay you when you're in corporeal form. But they'll have a similar experience level, so you'll have a decent chance of defending yourself.

Even with assistance from other humans, *Demon's Souls* is a game best left to the most masochistic, hardcore gamer. Its brutality

becomes slightly more digestible once you overcome the grueling learning curve, but this remains an insanely hard game that will test the spirit of even the most resolute RPG veteran. *Demon's Souls* will have every gamer out there running—it's just a matter of whether you'll run in a panic away from the jaws of the beast or straight into them, swinging a wicked sword and sounding your battle cry.

Nathan Meunier

★★★★



It looks good and plays okay. It's just not that different from previous PSP offerings.

# Need for Speed SHIFT

A SHIFT in name alone

**PSP** PRICE: \$39.99 ESRB: Everyone PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts DEVELOPER: EA Bright Light

**T**he PS3 version of *Need for Speed SHIFT* literally kicked our butts in the face with its insanely addictive micro-milestone based gameplay and whiplash inducing cockpit view. So we had our fingers crossed that the PSP version would reflect that revolution...bummer. Instead, PSP owners basically get a no frills, lite version of every *NFS* ever made. It's not a bad game at all—there are still plenty of race types and it's multiplayer enhanced for portability—it just treads no new ground whatsoever.

Whereas the console version had about a billion incentives to keep your engine running, the PSP iteration has little more than points based on pole position. There are some "Loyalty" rewards to be earned by sticking with the same car, but you unlock so many new vehicles that most folks will prefer to move on to a ride with higher stats.

Motion blurs and crash cams are somewhat exhilarating, but there's nothing above and beyond anything you've seen or driven previously. *SHIFT* on PSP is basically an oddball standalone title that shares very little with the phenomenal console version. Is it a fairly solid game in its own right? Yes, absolutely. But the PSP effort really could've used a little more of the full-sized version's actual evolution.

Chris Antista

★ ★ ★



We hate to say it twice on a single page, but *Gran Turismo* on PSP is here. Why would you turn the key on this too-typical jalopy instead?



The full-sized *Dirt 2* apparently had too much fun to fit on a UMD, so the developers left it out.

## Dirt 2

Fun gets left in the dust

**PSP** PRICE: \$29.99 ESRB: Everyone 10+ PUBLISHER: Codemasters DEVELOPER: Somo Digital

**G**orgeous environments, impeccable handling, and a superbly thorough rally experience. These three things define the *Dirt* series on full-sized consoles. Unfortunately, they just so happen to be entirely missing from the sinistral casual and stripped-down PSP edition of *Dirt 2*. The jackaluster graphics and barely-there gameplay are so bare bones, we honestly found ourselves wondering if this is a part of an iPhone game.

We finished the single-player game in two hours. Initially, we easily aced the handful of identical events, as rival cars slowed to let us stay ahead and even stopped entirely to enable us to catch up. Then, inexplicably, they just become faster than us. Not better at racing—faster, blowing past us even when we should have been un-catchable, like as we blasted down a straightaway at top speed. It's as if they never expected anyone to play that far.

The PS3 version's "flashback" do-overs are replaced by a madly inconsistent respawn option. And there are licensed vehicles and body kits, but the car-specific stats and XP have been removed, so you're really only choosing between the blue car and the red car. And every car corners like a wet brick—don't even try power-sliding. Which leaves us wondering: How the hell is this considered good enough on a system that just got *Gran Turismo*? Chris Antista

★ ★



You know you're in trouble when one of the good things about the game is that it ends after only a couple of hours.

PSP R



# Obscure: The Aftermath

Beer, Boobs, and Beasts

**PSP PRICE:** \$29.99 **ESRB:** Mature **PUBLISHER:** Playlogic Entertainment  
**DEVELOPER:** Hydrevison Entertainment

In the tongue-in-cheek style of campy, modern-day teen horror flicks, *Obscure: The Aftermath* follows a group of students entering the drug muddled daze of college. When our heroes dip into the latest craze in substance abuse—ingesting strange black flowers with hallucinogenic properties—people start mutating and getting ripped apart. You'll help the six main characters plow through hell and back, two at a time, in a survival-horror jaunt full of gory dismemberments and buckets of cheese.

The sharpness of the game's creepier moments is dulled by the often inane banter and general stupidity of the characters involved. Each has unique abilities like computer hacking, strength, and maneuverability—but they're otherwise worthless bags of meat with personalities to match. Combat works far better when you're playing co-op with a friend, (one of the game's shining features), since the lame AI often puts your companion right in the line of fire during solo jaunts.

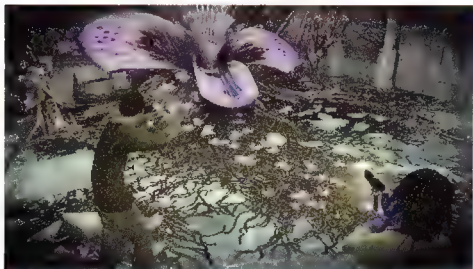
The visuals look good, but the camera tends to choose lousy angles (though you'll sometimes be rewarded with an unexpected face full of cleavage). Light puzzle work and some intense timed sequences round out this linear port. *The Aftermath* is good, stupid fun to pick up and play, but it might rot your brain in the process.

Nathan Meunier

★★★★



These are students, not soldiers, so your weapons are typically makeshift items like baseball bats, hockey sticks, and the occasional chainsaw.



As a basic rule, giant plants with bloody human corpses protruding from them are a poor landscaping choice.



The visual cue for note bends is actually helpful and a gameplay improvement over *SingStar*'s presentation.

## Disney Sing It: Pop Hits

SingStar for tweens

**ESRB:** Everyone **PRICE:** \$49.99 **PUBLISHER:** Disney Interactive Studios **DEVELOPER:** Zodi Media

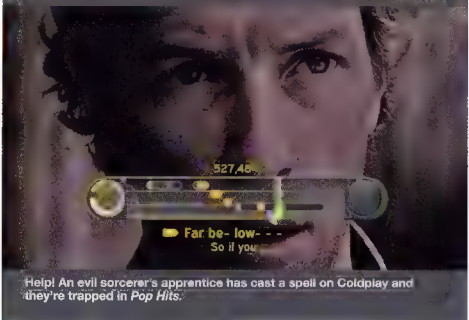
If the mere mention of Fearless Montana or the Jonas Brothers compels you to practice headshots in *Killzone*, move along—the bubblegum sing-along game ain't for you.

Like the *SingStar* series, the key to your gleeful (or disdainful) for this third-in-the-series Disney *Sing It* title is almost wholly dependent on its 30-song line-up. If you're fanatically familiar with Disney's tween-star stable, you'll squeal with girly delight at songs like Montana's "Let's Get Crazy" and the Jonas Bros' "S.O.S." There's also a smattering of non-Disney-spawned artists like Colbie Caillat—and (oddly) Coldplay—to supplement a song collection heavy on feel-good themes melded with liberal doses of tween angst. The only real minus is the lack of an online *SingStore* equivalent to freshen the song list. After all, bubblegum tends to lose flavor relatively quickly.

Apart from the tunes, *Pop Hits* manages to one-up *SingStar* with a sing-along mechanic that's visually easier to follow and acoustically more accurate—aiding on-the-fly vocal adjustments. There's even a *Sing It* Pro mode that offers instruction on proper singing and breathing techniques that proves informative and fun—which means that if you're stuck chaperoning a girls'-night get-together, there's now a chance that the songs might be sung in tune.

Roger Burchill

★★★★



Help! An evil sorcerer's apprentice has cast a spell on Coldplay and they're trapped in *Pop Hits*.

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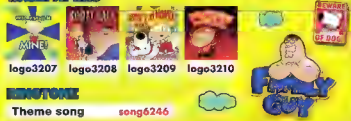
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## Wallpapers



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The graphics are low-key, but special attacks can get pretty pyrotechnic.

## Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Day

Experience the elegant art of leveling-up

**PSP** PRICE: \$29.99 ESRB: Teen PUBLISHER: NIS America DEVELOPER: Nippon Ichi Software

**W**hen it comes to turn-based strategy RPG goodness, this PSP re-release of the 2006 PS2 hit, delivers in truckloads. You could easily pour 80-plus hours into guiding heroic brawler Adell and his band of gonzo adventurers on their quest to defeat Overlord Zenon, a fearsome demon boss rumored to have a billion hit points.

There's an extra story mode, new characters, and a few new combat features pulled over from *Disgaea 3: Absence of Justice*, but don't expect any dramatic changes from the PS2 version. Still, even with only minimal additions, *Dark Hero Day* holds up incredibly well.

Like other *Disgaea* games, everything here is over-the-top. Characters are full of spunk and snark. Bombastic special attacks have you juggling enemies in the air with fantastic combos and unbelievable finishers.

The class system is also deep, with tons of jobs and abilities. You can even level-up your crew's equipment by battling through randomly generated dungeons. If you've never experienced the irreverence and elegance of a *Disgaea* title, *Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Days* is as good a place as any to jump into the series. Even longtime fans will enjoy a second romp through this simple, yet slick, PSP re-release.

Tyler Nagata

★★★★



You have 30 seconds to speed becoming a fast, loose, blood-thirsty hero.

## Half-Minute Hero

Fun at the speed of light

**PSP** PRICE: \$29.99 ESRB: Everyone PUBLISHER: Square Enix DEVELOPER: Seed Games

**I**magine having only 30 seconds to complete a frantic laundry list of heroic chores, including slaying an evil lord whose about to end the world in a cataclysm of fire. Every aspect of *Half-Minute Hero's* split-second gameplay is stretched in goofy, spastic chaos. This warp-speed RPG sends you plowing through enemies in lightning-quick encounters, leveling-up insanely fast, and charging headlong toward each level's final boss all within a ridiculously short time span. This silly concept makes for some intensely fun action. It's also a lot deeper than it first appears.

Bringing the Time Goddess lets you reset the clock, but she greedily raises the price each time. This gives you a better chance to turbo-grind, upgrade your gear, and tackle side-quests along the way. Hilarious storytelling and cute, retro pixel art infuses this spunky adventure with serious charm. Other modes offer wildly different variations on the core gameplay, letting you play as an arrow-firing princess, a monster-summoning overlord, and a knight sworn to protect his magical companion. Though many of *Half-Minute Hero's* whopping 120-plus quests fly by in the blink of an eye, you'll get a ton of mileage and many hours of enjoyment out of this gem.

Nathan Maurier

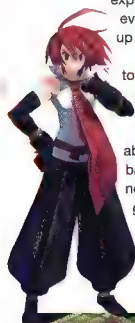
★★★★★

Mastodons, golems, blobby flame-pups—something tells us the little dudes with puny swords are in for a beating.



Vanquishing evil mushrooms is easier with your own army tagging along.

PSP | R



The maps are often beautifully drawn, but this is still a turn-based, battle-grid strategy game—be ready for massive, stat-heavy combat.

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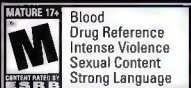


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After two fighting games, it's nice to have an action game...in which you mostly just fight.



For some reason, the Sexy Jutsu is everyone's favorite move.

## Naruto Shippuden Legends: Akatsuki Rising

Doesn't entirely rise to the occasion

PSP PRICE: \$39.99 ESRB: Teen PUBLISHER: Namco Bandal DEVELOPER: Namco Bandal

It seems people never get tired of orange jumpsuit-clad ninjas with demon spirit-powered super-skills.

After a pair of *Naruto*-themed fighting games, the PSP finally gets an action offering in the form of *Naruto Shippuden Legends: Akatsuki Rising*. And if you can correctly pronounce that jumble of words, chances are you already know that the game spotlights the opening storyline of the second *Naruto* anime series, in which the teenage ninja and his compatriots are tasked with rescuing a captured friend.

But while we appreciate the change of pace, the combat and game flow will only satisfy the most devoted *Naruto* junkies. You can't freely explore *Naruto*'s Hidden

Leaf Village and its surroundings (as you can in some other *Naruto* games)—instead, you'll simply be transported between dialogue-heavy cutscenes and

closed-off environments, where you'll pummel a bevy of bland baddies before the next story bit. Though RPG-esque elements like leveling characters and customizing attacks add some depth, combat primarily devolves into mashing the Square button and tossing in occasional ninjutsu maneuvers.

Sure enough, *Akatsuki Rising* is a solidly produced title that you can pour countless hours into. But it's also a somewhat dull shadow of what an exciting *Naruto* experience should be.

Andrew Hayward

★★★

## MotorStorm: Arctic Edge

Cloudy with a chance of adrenaline

This series that made the term "real-time terrain deformation" sound sexy on the PS3 bursts onto Sony's portable with barely a downshift of the gears. Sure, *MotorStorm: Arctic Edge* takes a bit of a hit in terms of knock-you-out visuals on the comparatively less powerful PSP. But its accessible arcade action, 12 maps, and 24 varied rides pump enough adrenaline into the portable to almost make you forget you're not clutching a DualShock 3.

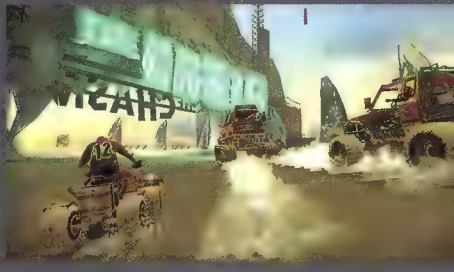
The real highlight of this PSP *MotorStorm* is right in the subtitle: replacing the sun-soaked locales of previous entries with an ice and snow-covered setting makes for a nice change of pace

and scenery. Slippery tracks and crushing avalanches add to the peril, and the ability to cool your boost power introduces some light strategy. A robust career mode and the more free-for-all "Wreckreation" challenges will get you comfortable behind the wheels of the various rides—including new snowmobiles—while also familiarizing you with each track's shortcuts, branching paths, jumps, and death pits. But once you've mastered these modes you'll want to jump into ad hoc or infrastructure multiplayer races for action that'll turn your knuckles as white as the snow-blanketed trails.

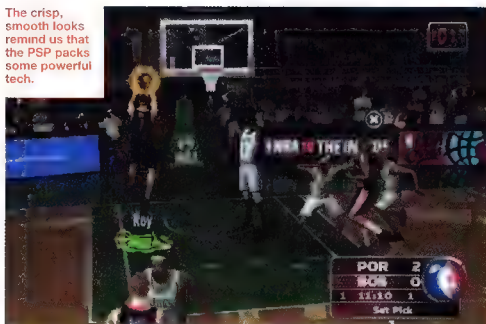
Matt Cabral



"Oh my gawd! You're going out in this weather? Wear your thick coat or you'll catch a cold." "Aw, Mom..."



The crisp, smooth looks remind us that the PSP packs some powerful tech.



## NBA 10: The Inside

Mini-game mini-sim

**PSP PRICE:** \$29.99 **ESRB:** Everyone  
**PUBLISHER:** SCEA  
**DEVELOPER:** Sony Santa Monica

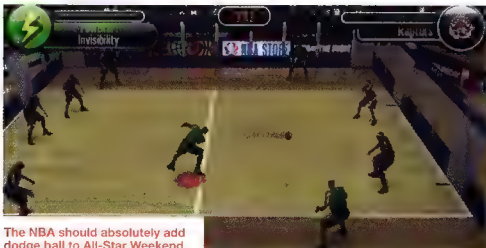
**W**hile you don't expect the depth and refinement of a PS3 hoops experience on

a handheld, you might expect more than *NBA 10: The Inside* ultimately delivers. More actual basketball, anyhow. Not that the collection of game modes, slew of mini-games, and unerring commitment to a casual basketball experience is particularly lacking, it just feels lightweight.

It's the domination of the mini-games that firmly pitches this game in the land of the casual. Bowling, pinball, an *Arkanoid* knock-off, and a *Bubble Bobble*-style variant with NBA slants are fun in small doses, but not worth the price of admission alone. Last season's Quest mode options have been expanded to include DodgeQuest; yes, that's dodgeball in a basketball sim. And the turf war-style Give&GoQuest is a surprisingly fun mode that we couldn't put down until we'd built a crew that could take over the country.

On a long plane ride where your entertainment choices are limited, or across a wireless network against friends, *NBA 10: The Inside* is a solid, if unremarkable NBA-themed experience. It's too basic to be a full-blown sim, though not as simplistic as a real casual game. It fits in its own space, diverting your attention in a throwaway, oddy fun, but hardly memorable basketball shootaround.

Rob Smith



The NBA should absolutely add dodge ball to All-Star Weekend.

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# PlayStation Network

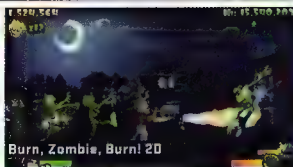
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Melody Bloxx



Brainpipe



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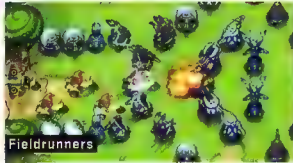
Hero of Sparta



Kahoots



Mighty Empires: The Great Mughals



Fieldrunners



FMX

## Mini Games

An army of titles stands poised to invade your PSP. Are you prepared?

So by now you may have noticed a new tab in the PlayStation store labeled "Minis." You may have even mustered the courage to open that tab only to discover a list of games you've absolutely never heard of. Well, we're here to explain. You see, Minis are quick, bite-sized games designed expressly for download on the PSP and PSPgo. The tiny file size (100MB or less) and emphasis on short bursts of light, fun gameplay make these games ideal for all you PSPers on the go.

Now, this program is not, and will not, eventually become an app store (like the one found on the iPhone), but it will offer you an immense variety of downloadable titles—from classics and old standards like *Pac-Man* and

pool, to more inventive games like *Little Track*, a puzzle game that features a maze crawling robot.

Best of all, these games are cheap—cheap to develop and (more importantly for gamers) cheap to buy. Independent studio Honeyslug, for instance, apparently put together its *Lemmings*-esque game *Kahoots* for around \$65 (after investing \$1,200 in a PSP dev kit). This could make Minis the perfect stepping stone for those who want to make it in the world of videogame development.

Though only 15 Minis were available at launch, Sony expects that number to surpass 50 by the end of the year. Sounds to us like these little games have huge potential. ■



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# PlayStation Network Games



Downloadable games for less than the price of a samurai sword. We...preview them.



Arrgh! Ya can always count on Cap'n Matt if there be a Booty Call.

## Matt Hazard: Blood Bath and Beyond

AVAILABLE: 01/2010 DEVELOPER: VICIOUS CYCLE

Remember Matt Hazard, the fictional videogame star that pretended to have a game legacy more extensive than Sonic and Mario's combined? Well, okay, his "real" game—the third-person shooter from early 2009—was a bit of a letdown (way too simplistic), but we fell in love with his fictional game history. Games with parody titles like *Matt and Dexter*,

*Haz-Matt Carts*, and *Choking Hazard: Candy Gramm*...how could we not be curious?

So, to appease Matt's growing fan base, developer Vicious Cycle is creating a *Matt Hazard* spin-off for the PSN. This time, Matt will star in a side-scrolling shooter with 3D graphics, interactive environments, and local co-op play (not online). Each stage will be a

snippet from one of Matt's previous games, with titles like "Booty Call: Chest of the Pirate Queen" (set on a pirate ship) and "Well FU, Too" (set in ancient Japan).

Each stage will feature a multi-phased boss at the end, and from what we played, the game seems funny enough to get you to pick up your controller initially and creative enough that you'll be blasting your way through it multiple times to improve your score.

Teresa Dun

## Gravity Crash

AVAILABLE: 04/2009 DEV: JUST ADD WATER



Following in the footsteps of early-'80s arcade shooters like *Gravitar*, *Gravity Crash* puts players in command of a nimble little spaceship that flies over, strafes, and often even lands on a series of neon-bright alien landscapes.

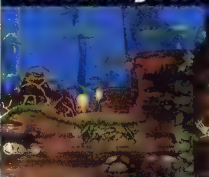
The goal is to pilot your maneuverable little vessel above the glowing lines of various planetary surfaces—filled with jagged peaks, craggy chasms, sheared-top mesas, and even the occasional depression holding bodies of water—in order to blow up hostile ground-based defenses, snag various pick-ups,

and finally (once you've mopped up any threats) land safely to pick up little space-suited friendlies. Barring the occasional freak meteorite storm, of course.

All the while, there's that eponymous gravity to contend with; it doesn't do much good if you execute an expert, tumbling strafing-run and then auger into the ground seconds later. *Gravity Crash* will offer more than 30 levels for both solo and multiplayer action, and there will even be a level-editor—a welcome, usual bonus for a shooter-style PSN title.

Chris Hudak

## Also Coming Soon



### Bonk: Brink of Extinction

AVAILABLE: 01/2010  
DEVELOPER: VIVIDOL

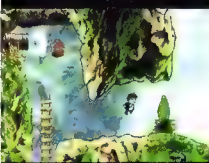
A side-scrolling, 3D revival of the classic TurboGrafx beat-'em-up complete with new transformation powers.



### Record of Agarest War

AVAILABLE: TBA  
DEVELOPER: RED/IDEA FACTORY

An "epic" strategy-RPG that supposedly offers over 100 hours of fantastical post-apocalyptic gameplay.



### Brail

AVAILABLE: TBA  
DEVELOPER: HUMBER KORKING

The highly praised, artistically inclined puzzle game that set XBLA sales records last summer.



# PSN Video Delivery Service

## UFC Light Heavyweight Champion Lyoto Machida speaks...and we tremble in fear

**T**he name Lyoto Machida might not be a household name just yet, but if he continues dominating the Ultimate Fighting Championship, the way he has the last year-and-a-half, it's only a matter of time. The son of a Shotokan karate master, this Brazilian martial artist has yet to lose a single round, thanks to an unorthodox style that combines elements of karate, jiu-jitsu, and sumo wrestling, and more. We spoke with Lyoto via a translator from his home in Brazil—which we figured was the safest distance.

**PTOM:** You're currently the Champion of the Light Heavyweight division, a weight class you share with fighters like Chuck Liddell and Tito Ortiz. We've met them, and they're both very nice, but incredibly dangerous men. Is Light Heavyweight the toughest division in UFC?

**Lyoto Machida:** Yes. No doubt about it. [Laughs]

You've never lost a single round as a UFC fighter. Why is that? Is it your style that throws your opponents off?

Yes, it has everything to do with my style. I'm a counterpuncher, and I use my foot movement. The way I move my feet, I keep my opponent from closing the gap. As a counterpuncher, I use that [when they dash in hoping to take me to the ground] and I strike.

We would ask something corny like, "what videogame character do you most resemble?" but considering you're IN a game, we think we know that answer. Have you played the recent UFC game? What did you think of the virtual you?

I have played it, absolutely. It was a perfect reproduction of my character—nobody could get me. [Laughs]

We have a list of a few of your past fights that people can download on PSN and watch on their PlayStation 3. If we name the fight, could you tell us your favorite moment from each one? Let's start with your bout with Tito Ortiz at UFC 84 back in May 2008. When I caught him with the knee and dropped him.

What about when you fought Thiago Silva at UFC 94 this past January?

The Superman punch! [Laughs]

Considering you won by knockout in Round One, that makes sense. One more: UFC 98 last May when you beat Rashad Evans to become the Light Heavyweight Champion. How did that feel? It was a dream come true. Since I was 15 years old, this is what I've had on my mind: to get the UFC belt. And then... It was a dream come true.

What's the hardest part about being a UFC fighter? Is it being away from your family? The busy schedule? The actual fighting?

The biggest challenge? [In English] To keep the belt a long time.

That wraps it up for us. Good luck in your fight against Mauricio Shogun on October 24.

[In English] Thank you, my friend.



## TOP VDS DOWNLOADS



### MOVIES

[Fast & Furious \(2009\)](#)

[The Last Airbender](#)

[Dragonball: Evolution](#)

[The Last House on the Left](#)

[17 Again](#)

### TV SHOWS

[Family Guy](#)

[The Mentalist](#)

[Dexter](#)

[Robot Chicken](#)

[Weeds](#)



# Letters

Feedback, Insight, Readers' Ideas, and Bathroom Bonding



▲ This month's conversation starter

"Obviously, 2K Marin is composed of sapient barnacles. As further evidence, I cite the underwater segment they just had to have and their tendency to stick to boats." ➔



## ↑ DOESN'T HOLD WATER

I noticed that in a letter in the January issue, "barnacle310" suggested the ability to play as a Big Daddy in *BioShock*. Then in the June issue, Scott mentioned the "heart-stopping revelation" that in 2K Marin's *BioShock 2*, "you are a Big Daddy." Obviously, 2K Marin is composed of sapient barnacles. As further evidence, I cite the underwater segment they just had to have and their tendency to stick to boats.

Paul Deaville II, Jennings LA

We were very intrigued by your theory, Paul, so just for you, we contacted 2K Mann...who explained that in fact, *none* of the employees there are barnacles. A civil rights suit has since been filed on behalf of crustaceans everywhere.

## NO PS3? THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

Not having a section for applications on PSN seems like a real missed opportunity. The iPhone has a ton of applications that

users can buy and install. Why is this not done for the PS3? What about a version of Skype for the PS3 that uses the PlayStation Eye and wireless headset? Or how about an application for reading PDF files? There are a lot of applications that could be written for the PS3 and sold on the PSN in the same manner that games and videos are sold. Are the resources in the PS3 hardware really that tight that applications would be too limited? Are there no developers that want to do applications?

Robert Natal, New Mexico

Man, you guys are demanding. Isn't it enough that you can watch movies, look at pictures, play music, connect to the Internet, and play awesome games on your PS3? And while we know the über-flexible PS3 hardware can handle most any task asked of it, it's unlikely that you'll see iPhone-type apps for it. But check out our story on pg. 88 about Minis—bite-sized bits of PSP gaming goodness downloadable from PSN. Of course, if somebody comes up with a sammich-making PS3 app, we're there.

## HIGH ART

In the July 09 and August 09 issues, there was an article about



## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### TOILET HUMOR

Today, I "officially" subscribed to PTOM. Granted, I have been reading the mag for many years, but I work at a grocery store and found myself swiping the magazine from the stand and taking it to the restroom every time a new one came in (yes, I got in trouble many times, but that's besides the point). But I finally thought of something: I was taking away a sale from you guys...and you guys are AWESOME! I don't even know you guys and yet I feel I have this special bond with you just by sitting in the restroom reading the funny stuff you guys come up with. So from now on, I will get a subscription and read for countless hours in the bathroom at home.

Amber, via email

Um, have you heard of the term TMI, Amber? While we too feel a special connection with our readers and appreciate being a part of your lives, we really don't need all the details of how you share your "private" time with us. The bathroom should be a place of quiet contemplation and solitude, but now you've got us wondering, "Hrm...I wonder what Amber's up to?" every time we have to pee. But thanks for the subscription; we can finally afford to go out for lunch now.



PlayStation developers that included a section on how to get a job at one of these fantastic studios. My question is...is there drug testing at these studios and what would be the point if there is? Making games that are on the cutting edge of gaming technology takes creativity and devotion. Art and music follows that same degree of creativity. Most art was created under the influence, I do believe...since this question was developed under the intoxication of beer (and yes, I am over 21).

**Robert Perkowski, via email**  
Interesting question, but we're really not privy to the specific hiring requirements of development studios. And we'd have to challenge your assertion that most creative endeavors require being under the influence. Month after month we manage to ship issues of PTOM goodness on nothing more than dangerous levels of caffeine. So do like PTOM, kids: Say no to drugs and drink more coffee. Carlos the Intern does.

## MADDENING

I love all sorts of videogames. Platformers, first-person shooters, action/adventure, and even the occasional RPG all make their way into my shiny little black box. The one type of game I refuse to buy (or even give any ounce of credibility to) is yearly sports games like *Madden* football. Every year EA Sports pounds out another one of these things. They give each edition a new cover and a few minor gameplay adjustments and graphical enhancements and call it a brand new game. They even have the audacity to ask a full retail price for the game. The amount of new content in *Madden 10* versus *Madden 09* is pretty much the same as the new content offered by the latest map pack for *Killzone 2*. You know how much that new map pack cost? It sure wasn't 60 dollars. People in the gaming industry constantly say that consumers need to vote with their wallets and game developers will learn what they can and cannot get away with. Well, when it comes to *Madden*, EA Sports is

getting away with the biggest scam in videogame history.

**Andrew Walz, via email**  
You may actually have a good point, Andrew. But it's the same kind of point that non-sports fans make when they say, "What? Another Super Bowl already? Didn't they just have one last year?" So you're either a hardcore sports/*Madden* fan or you're not. You either want the latest roster updates and incremental gameplay refinements or you don't. Ultimately, it's your decision whether it's worth dropping 60 bucks on every annual *Madden* iteration. But as long as millions of gamers do, EA Sports will keep churning 'em out year after year.

## BAD RAP

You know how when you put in some sports game or racing or whatever and you hear that annoying, filthy, talentless music otherwise known as "rap"? Well I'm sick of it. I just can't stand playing *Fight Night* while a confused man blabbers about money, girls, cars, and money. This is a global plague, and it must be stopped. Put some death metal in games, you know? How do you think the death metal community feels? Same as me. It's gotta stop, and stop now.

**Javier, via email**  
While we at PTOM feel we have discriminating tastes, we never endorse discrimination. So while rap may not be our music genre of choice, we don't begrudge Hip Hop fans their preferred tunes. But a much simpler solution would be for developers to include the functionality for players to access their own personal play lists during gameplay, which hasn't been implemented nearly enough.

## WHY SO SERIOUS?

As a longtime subscriber/reader, I always look forward to the day I come home to find a copy of PTOM in my mailbox. But something's been bothering me for a few years. You see, when I first started reading the mag, back in 2002 or so, your magazine was radically different than all the other gaming magazines out there. You guys had fun,



## Holy contest winner, Batman!

That's right, the Reviews Intro page of our October issue featured a trio of Batmans. (Batman?) But could you identify the actor under each identity-obscuring mask? Well Cory Tanner certainly could. He correctly ID'd each image and will receive a random prize for his efforts. Check out his answers below and then go submit your response to this month's contest!

The first picture is Christian Bale as Batman from *The Dark Knight*. It's at the top because it's one of the highest grossing films ever and a badass one at that.

The second picture is Adam West as Batman from the '60s TV series. The show was pretty cheesy, but gets bonus points for being old school.

The last picture is George Clooney as Batman and *Robin*, a movie of which I am not a fan. Batsuit with nipples... 'nuff said.

They are all pictures of Batman to honor the awesomeness that is *Batman: Arkham Asylum*. I am a little disappointed that you guys didn't show the best Batman of all time: Michael Keaton from the Tim Burton movies.

inserting witty comments, jokes, and pranks into your reviews. I absolutely loved it. Now I feel that you're trying to be too serious in your magazine, but by doing so, you become less distinctive from other gaming magazines! I mean, what about the interviews with the 800-pound gorilla? Those were comedic gold! There were others, too, like when you asked readers for their favorite gaming moments or did caption contests, that kind of thing. Now, I realize there have been some staff changes and the 800-lb gorilla is no longer with you, but can't you bring some humor back into the magazine?

**Dan, via email**  
Sorry Dan, no gorilla. But you're right: those were good times.

## QUICK FLICKS

I love and subscribe to Netflix, but I would cancel that subscription in a second if the PlayStation Store offered a "watch now"



## No Go on the Logo

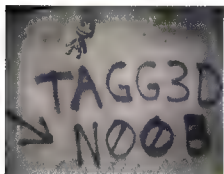
Reader and "graphic design-minded person" Parker J. Williams had a problem with the *Guitar Hero 5* logo. He felt the rounded five simply looked out of place next to the pointy letters and that it really should have been a Roman numeral just like the three in *GH III*. So Parker took matters into his own hands. Check out his new and improved design!



## The Badasses of PlayStation

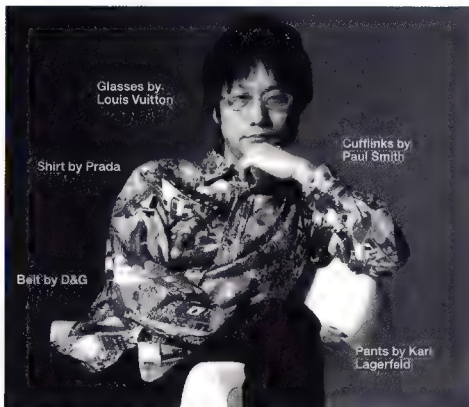


How do you know you're committed to gaming for life? When you have it permanently inked on your arm like reader Miguel Cervantes! He tells us, "You might think it's crazy to get this type of tattoo, but if you have had videogames in your life for as long as I have, it makes perfect sense. As to why I got a PS3 controller? Well, I am fully on board with the Sony/PS3 brand, technology, and vision! The name at the bottom is for my wife. She puts up with my love of videogames, so as a special nod to her, I placed her name with something that I love equally. *Equally, Miguel?* Are you sure you don't want to say 'more' (she might read this)? And you better hope she doesn't notice what got top billing on your arm!"



As for this next image, well, it's just a couple crazy Canadians (who signed their email as simply "J S") who put the *LittleBigPlanet* stencil from our Holiday '08 issue to good use. Hope you aren't doing anything too illegal up there, guys.

"I have a TON of map packs, *LBP* and *PAIN* costumes, *Burnout* cars, and various other gismos and gadgets, and there isn't ANY way to delete them?!" →



movie subscription service. I am not sure how well the video section of the PlayStation store is doing right now; maybe it's just fine. But I feel they could definitely boost their sales by offering a solid library of movies and shows we can watch instantly online. They don't have to get rid of the pay-per-movie entirely either—the two services can compliment each other. What do you think?

Muhamed, via email

Seems doable, but the only real difference you're suggesting is that the Video Delivery Service offer instant access instead of a download. And that's a cool idea, but is that really the most pressing feature that needs to be added on PS3? Is your life so packed that you can't wait for your next movie or show to download? Go outside, talk to a girl, hug your parents...your video will be waiting for you when you get back. It's okay.

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

I was wondering if we will ever be able to change our PSN names. I know I could just start a new one, but then I'd lose my Trophies. Xbox will let you change your name for a price, and I'm to the point that I would gladly pay (and

I bet that if you took a poll, there are a lot of others that want a name change too). Will we ever have that option?

Devin, Coos Bay OR

Hmm...contemplating an identity change to escape prosecution, are we? Don't tell us the details. What we don't know can't hurt you. Still, we feel ya. Roger has been regretting choosing "Pretty Princess" for his super-secret, private PSN name (he never gets any peace on *Home*). How about it, Sony?

### IT'S ALL RIGHTS

I just read the "SNAAAAKE!!!" letter in the September issue and I understand why Xbox owners are getting PS3 titles, but what about PS3 owners getting Xbox titles? I was an Xbox owner at one time and was hooked on the *Halo* series and *Gears of War*. If companies want to make money, why are these games not out for the PS3?

(BOSS)mannyinc, via email

What happy peace-love hippy world are you living in?! In the real world, companies spend good money making sure that triple-A system exclusives stay that way—at least companies that have a vested interest in

selling a particular console platform. Which is why we don't get to play *Halo* games and Xbox 360 owners won't be playing *Uncharted 2* this holiday season. It is the natural order of things.

## ← GAMING AND FASHION ICON

I'm trying to update my wardrobe, and I really like Hideo Kojima's style. I'm actually about his size, too. You guys know where he shops? Maybe a website I can order from?

PatientJ, via email

Since the PTOM staff usual attire consists of game-themed T-shirts and jeans, we might not be the best ones to ask this question. But considering that Kojima's clothes-budget is probably reflective of the bank he made with the *Metal Gear* series, we suggest checking out [Tooexpensiveforyou.com](http://Tooexpensiveforyou.com).

## OUT WITH THE OLD

For some time now, I have been chipping away at my PS3's memory, so when the hard drive started to dwindle past the 15GB mark, I had to take action. I deleted game data, downloaded games, and music/videos, but there is still half my hard drive space missing! I couldn't find an explanation for this, besides...add-on content! Now I was looking and searching for some way to delete add-on content, but there isn't any way to do it!! I mean what the \$@#! is Sony thinking?! I have a TON of map packs, *LBP* and *PAIN* costumes, *Burnout* cars, and various other gismos and gadgets, and there isn't ANY way to delete them?! I request that Sony put an "additional content" folder right below the game data utility folder. That way you can easily find and get rid of unused data.

Will, Colonia IL

Okay, Sony, PTOM readers keep having great ideas. We hope you're taking notes—we

## contact



Send your thoughts and comments to PTOM [Letters@futureus.com](mailto:Letters@futureus.com). 'cause Rob and Teresa bailed and these pages ain't writin' themselves.

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expect you to implement 'em in future firmware updates. Oh... and send the royalty checks to PTOM. We have a special bond with our readers and they'd want it that way.

## OF ZOMBIES AND INTERNS

Why does Carlos have a bag on his head? Is he ugly? Or is he a chainsaw zombie wannabe?

Brian, via email

Because based on what we pay him, he'll never come up with the money Ken charges to do a proper illustration. And he looks like a chainsaw zombie wannabe.



## PLAYSTATION: THE MAGAZINE: THE GAME

Let's say a company wanted to make a game about you guys at PTOM (exclusively for PS3 and PSP, of course). What genre of game do you think it would be, and what genre would you like it to be?

Thomas Vanglahn, via email

Lessee... Teresa's an RPG or MMO with cute, quirky characters. Scott's a music/rhythm-based shooter. Roger's a driving game platformer. Then Eric's an open-world Action RPG in which he gets to ride a dragon, wield a lightsaber, and carry 1,000 pounds of sporks, spell books, and artillery. And Ken's a soccer game. So if you took all those elements and mixed it up in a PTOM game, you'd just end up calling it Action Adventure—which is what companies do when they can't figure out what genre to label a game.

## THE NEXT GREAT MUSIC GAME

I'm in the marching band at my high school and play my PS3 in my spare time. I always thought that it would kick ass if there were a videogame about marching band. And I'm not talking about that trash that came on the Wii, *Major Minor's Majestic March* (I would suggest tearing your spine out through your nose before playing that game). I'm talking about something that could be great! You could recruit members,

buy equipment, create show music, drill, and a bunch of other stuff! It doesn't even have to be a full game; it could be on PSN! I'm just saying, if it ever happened, it would make my band's year.

Jason, via email

We're all laughing at you, Jason. Except for Roger, who was a band geek and proudly admits it and is disturbingly excited by the prospect of designing and plotting out his own field show formations. But he insists there be an RPG element that lets you hook up with bandmates in the back of the bus during band trips. Roger recommends flute players—whose breath-holding abilities verge on amazing. TMI, Roger, TMI.

## DATES ARE BUT A NUMBER

It seems that many of your reviews come out usually a month or so after the game has been released. What is the reasoning behind not publishing your reviews closer to, if not before, the release dates?

Jonathan Bouike, via email

Well, Jonathan, we can't review a game until it's done. And games often aren't done until just a couple weeks before they hit shelves. Add in time to play it, write the review, then layout, print and distribute the magazine, and it should be easy to see why our reviews and a game's release date don't always sync. But we always endeavor to make up for the occasional lapse in timeliness with a focus on getting it right.

## LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

Wow, you guys are great! My dad absolutely hated videogames before he skimmed over my first issue of PTOM. He always thought I was just some random kid that played way too many videogames, but now he plays my PS3 more than me and my brother do (which is weird because my bro and I usually play it almost all day). After reading your magazine, he became addicted because of all the upcoming

games. He also used to hate buying me videogames, but now he drools over every E3 trailer he sees.

Robert, via email

Sorry to say, Robert, but we've encountered this syndrome before. People who've never experienced the wonders of videogames or PTOM editorial often become totally enraptured and consumed by it once exposed. On the upside, you'll probably have lots more games to play when your Dad's sleeping. On the downside, he's going to quit his job to play games all the time. If it gets worse, write back, and we'll deny all culpability.

## UP IS THE NEW DOWN

My cousin and I were having a debate about which controller scheme is more "normal" or popular among gamers. I like to invert the Y-axis and he does not. My cousin claims more people do not invert since a non-inverted Y-axis is the default setting in most games. I have tried to think back on my 25 years of gaming to remember when I started inverting the Y-axis or when that even became an option in games, but I can't recall either one. Maybe you guys can tell me when inverting became an option. I was also hoping you guys could take a poll to find out which is more popular: invert or non-invert. If more gamers prefer inverted controls, we should then petition all game developers to make an inverted Y-axis the default setting. What do you guys think?

Fred Georgi, Orlando FL

First of all, we need to figure out what's inverted and non-inverted. Is up really up when it's non-inverted? Or is up actually down when it's inverted? Or is down just down when it's extroverted, but only on Sundays? It's all so confusing. Here's a thought: Be happy that there's an option to choose your preferred scheme by constantly fiddling with the settings until it just starts working.

## The PSP World Tour Continues!



This month, the PSP heads to Mexico with reader Robert Morgan. He took a break from his dream vacation to tell us, "This photo was taken after our cruise ship landed in Costa Maya, Mexico. We just couldn't wait to hit the beach. Water and sand is nothing to my PSP." Consider us jealous, Robert.



Reader Chris Carchedi, on the other hand, ventured in the wild, untamed lands of New Hampshire. "This picture contains me holding my PSP in front of the Arctus Falls, the tallest waterfall in New Hampshire. While on vacation, I noticed that there was an abundance of other Sony fans playing their PSPs throughout towns like North Conway. I even saw a rather large man playing a pink Hannah Montana PSP! \*shudder\*\*

When deviating from the default setting you may want to try the inverted controller setting with a non-inverted Y-axis. If you prefer an inverted Y-axis we recommend a non-inverted controller, which can be nice sometimes too.

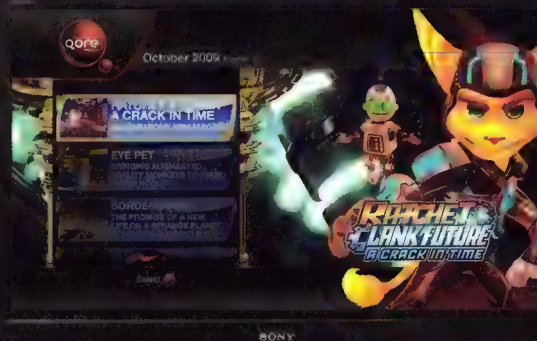


qore

Guest: Veronica Belmont

## QORE EPISODE 17

Featuring Ratchet & Clank:  
A Crack In Time, EyePet,  
Borderlands, and BLUR



**Q**ore: Presented by the PlayStation Network, is a monthly interactive video production covering the world of PlayStation. Qore provides its audience with exclusive behind-the-scenes access to developers and their games, both from the SCE Worldwide Studios and the third-party community, where the audience member can freely navigate through the content.

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Featuring

### A Cracking Good Time

Insomniac Games has been one of the premiere PlayStation developers for more than 13 years. The company's latest game, *Ratchet & Clank: A Crack in Time*, wraps up the storyline first started in 2007's *Tools of Destruction*. Host Veronica Belmont visits the developer to talk about some of the imaginative new weaponry and the destinies of our favorite platform genre furball.



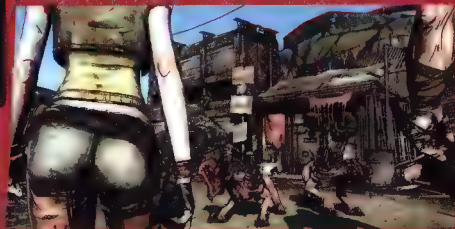
### Perfect Pets

At E3, Sony impressed the crowd with its demonstration of the upcoming motion controller. While we await the arrival of the new peripheral, another innovation will be here soon: the EyePet! Correspondent Audrey Cleo plays around with this cuddly virtual pal that may provide a glimpse into the future of interactive PS3 technology.



### On the Border

Gearbox Software is best known for its WWII franchise *Brothers in Arms*, but now its designers have created a unique blend of the RPG and shooter genres, adding co-op action and a groundbreaking content generation system. Qore visits the Dallas, Texas studio to learn more about *Borderlands*.



### A Clear Vision

Another well-known developer, Bizarre Creations, is returning to its roots in an attempt to bring "fun" back to the racing genre. Audrey takes *BLUR* for a spin to see how imaginative power-ups and weapons will set the game apart from the crowd.



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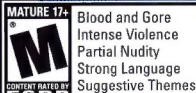
-GAME INFORMER

"MY ENTIRE FACE WAS BLOWN OFF  
BY MAXIMUM AWESOME!"

-IGN



BAYONETTA.COM



PS3  
PlayStation 3



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